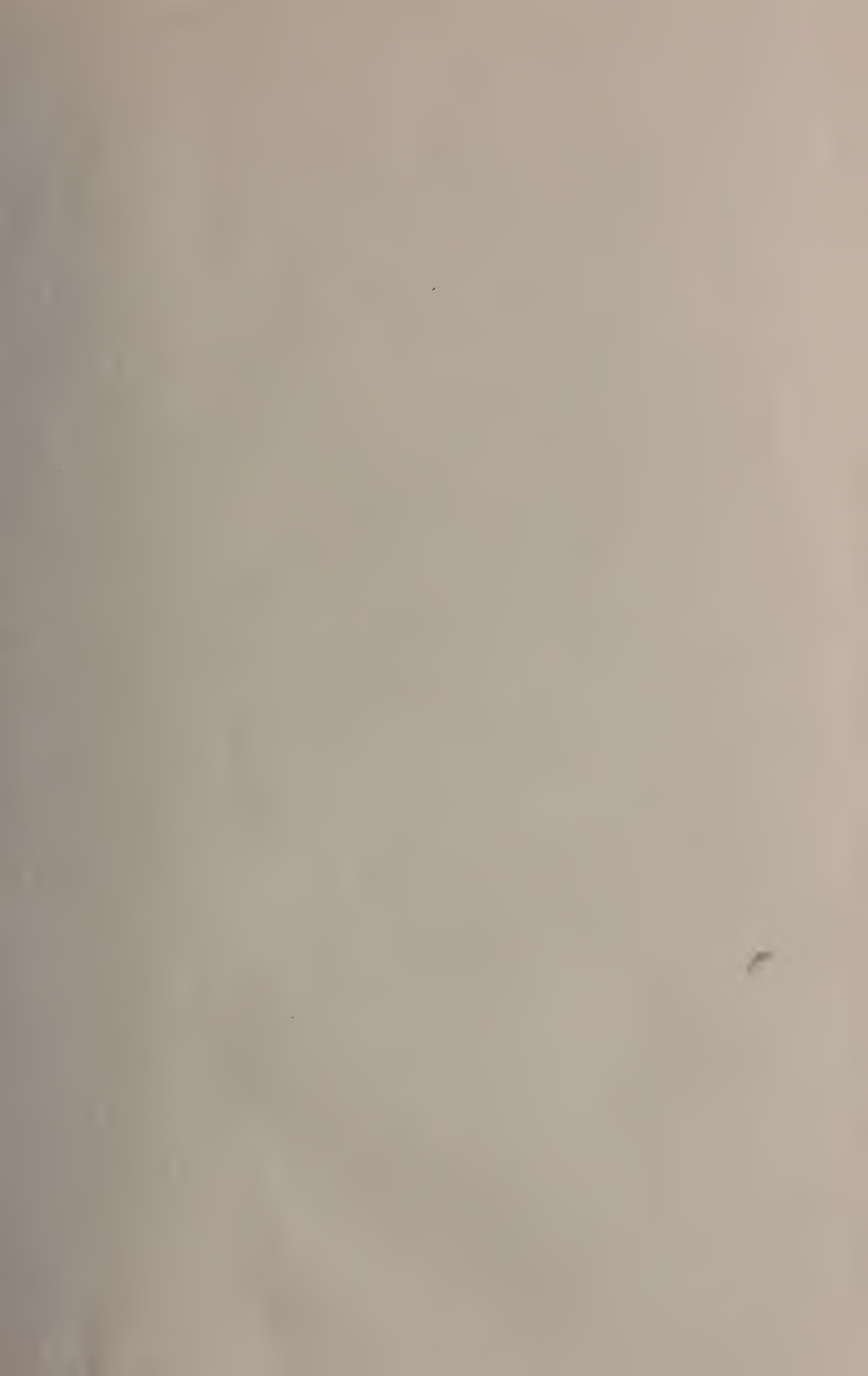


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ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS IN WADY MUKÁTTÉB. — Page 85.

Some have supposed these and other similar inscriptions in the Peninsula to be the work of the ancient Israelites; others ascribe them to early Christian pilgrims; others, still, regard them as the only known remains of the language of the Nabathæans, an Arabian people whose capital was Petra.



79

# STUDIES

IN

# BIBLE LANDS.

BY

*William L. Gage*  
REV. W. L. GAGE,

EDITOR OF RITTER'S "COMPARATIVE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE," ETC., ETC.

*W. L. Gage*

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WITH SEVENTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PUBLISHED BY  
THE AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

No. 164, TREMONT STREET, BOSTON.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THE following work brings together in convenient form the substance of a course of twelve lectures delivered in the spring of 1867, before the Lowell Institute, Boston. The book is now published, not as an original contribution to biblical geography, but to bring to a large and devout class of readers such information respecting the sacred lands as should make the Old Testament a more vivid and intelligible book. As the editor and translator of Ritter's Palestine, I have been compelled to make the familiar acquaintance of many works which treat of Bible geography; and it is my hope that this effort to discuss the theme according to Ritter's method will be greatly instrumental in doing good. Whatever makes the Bible clear, affords no slight aid to those who desire to make the Bible useful; and no one can hope to have that book do its great work in promoting the well-being of man, without bidding God-speed to every effort which will make it more accessible to the minds of men. The Bible contains sacred truths in the garb of facts; these facts are generally in the form of history; and their significance is found first of all in the geographical key to the history. It is earnestly hoped that this book will do somewhat toward making over to its reader that invaluable key.

W. L. GAGE.

HARTFORD, CONN., Sept. 23, 1869.

NOTE. — A small, but clear and beautiful, map of Palestine in *relief*, i.e., with the mountains raised above the surface, affording thereby a better knowledge of the Holy Land than any engraved map can give, has been prepared in Germany under the direction of the author of this book, and can be had, mounted and ready to hang in the library or study, by sending a dollar to Rev. W. L. Gage, Hartford, Conn. It can also be obtained at the rooms of the American Tract Society, 164 Tremont Street, Boston.

W. L. G.



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Those marked T are from the admirable wood-cuts in "The Illustrated New Testament," published by Murray, London. Those marked B are from the very accurate steel-plate engravings of W. H. Bartlett. Those marked P are from Bonar's "Palestine for the Young," published by the London Religious Tract Society. All give views of places as they now appear.

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# STUDIES IN BIBLE LANDS.

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## I.

### EDEN, ARARAT, AND THE TENTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS.

THERE are many ways in which a correct view of the lands of the Bible may be laid before the reader ; and it is important at the outset to choose that one which shall allow an arrangement so orderly and symmetrical that it will be alike pleasant and profitable. The lands which lie at the basis of the Scripture story may be examined physically, as has been done with marked skill, both in Stanley's excellent work, and the posthumous volume of Robinson ; they may be examined as a traveler would pass through them, their objects spoken of in the order in which they greet the eye, and without any reference to the historical connection. Both of these ways have their value ; and were our subject the physical geography of the Holy Land, it might, possibly, be well to speak of the mountains, rivers, lakes, plains, and valleys by themselves, as well as viewed comparatively. And were the theme announced as the report of travel in the Holy Land, the most graphic method would be to lead the reader by the hand from place to place, and to give in pic-



turesque language the results of adventure. There is another way still: one which shall cause the theme to have visible *growth* before the eye; which shall take it in its most rudimentary phase, and cause it to enlarge before the sight with the enlargement of empires and the expanding destinies of nations. This, the historical method, is the one we shall follow. It has not yet been made generally familiar; but its merits are very great.

I propose first, by way of introduction, to spread out the panorama of Bible lands as presented in the opening pages of the Scripture, — those vague, most imperfectly known regions, whose names we have in the familiar Eden, Nod, Shinar, Ararat, and the dark and tangled geographical masses of the tenth of Genesis. There can be no systematic delineation of this obscure part of our theme: it must be glanced at, summed up as best we may, surveyed in a broad light, and then left behind.

We come then to the true threshold of our subject; to a place which is our point of departure, — Ur of the Chaldees, the first home of Abraham. That spot, like the profuse spring which bubbles up there even now, may be likened to a fountain, isolated and almost unknown, but which gives rise to a stream that runs on and on, widening with every step, acquiring new volume and power, until at last, too wide to be bridged, it enters the sea. I propose to trace the history of the Jewish people from its commencement in ancient Chaldæa, and to follow the wanderings of the patriarchs across the land of Palestine; to go with them into Egypt; to pass with the tribes, the infant and nascent nation, across the wilds and athwart the shadows of the dreadful Sinaitic moun-

tain waste ; to track their course through the trans-Jordanic region, over the sacred river, and along the path of their conquest, to watch the growth of their empire, and the alternating enlargement and contraction of their boundaries, till we see them attain their maximum limits. Enough to say that there is little question that we shall be able to touch a line, which, reaching westward to Tarshish, and eastward to Ophir, shall span the widest limits of territory which can be embraced in what is known as biblical geography. In this way we shall be compelled, it is true, to run over the course of Scripture narrative in such a manner as almost to make one believe, who is not acquainted with the object in view, that the theme is Bible history rather than Bible geography ; yet only by a close comparison of the Scripture narrative with the lands whence it originated shall we be able to appreciate worthily the significance of the physical framework in which the Bible deeds were inclosed. Repassing the country again and again, and in every direction, we shall at length know it in all its parts ; and the generalization which may be drawn, so far particularly as Palestine is concerned, will best be made when we shall have trodden the roads of patriarchs and conquerors so often, and with so observant an eye, that the summing up and grouping of the subject shall be almost spontaneous.

It has been a question to be carefully considered, how far it is well, in a series like this, to endeavor to awaken or guide the interest of readers in matters which have been the subject of prolonged and learned inquiry. There is hardly an important issue in the department of biblical geography which might not engage the mind for weeks or even months.

To take two or three instances from this debatable ground, let me cite the details of the tenth chapter of Genesis, the topography of Jerusalem, and the site of Ophir. To these and kindred themes, whole volumes have been given, and respecting them no full results have yet been attained. Circumstances have compelled me to pass over a great deal of this kind of inquiry, only to my own utter weariness, and with the conviction that it is a field of investigation which, however congenial to the German mind, is utterly unattractive to most Americans at least. The antiquarian instinct is not strong with us as a nation : wherever it exists it is exceptional ; and it would be folly to presume on interesting an American public in problems which awaken no enthusiasm beyond a circle comprising a few hundred Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans. Those who care to study the antiquities of the subject will find ample scope in Ritter's great work, recently published in an English version,\* as well as the learned monographs from which Ritter draws. It will best answer our purpose to take the results of scholarly inquiry, and endeavor to apply them to one single and simple end, the making of our Bible reading and study more intelligible, and therefore more interesting.

The first geographical land mentioned in the Bible is that strange, mysterious EDEN, over which commentators have so long stumbled, and which has been declared to be one of the regions which no man will ever be able to locate. It has had

\* Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula, by Prof. Carl Ritter. Translated and adapted to the wants of biblical students, by W. L. Gage. Four vols. 8vo. D. Appleton & Co.



a treatment widely different and varying according to the bias of the minds that read the Bible. Some have dealt with it as a vague, mythical land, not intended to be understood as amenable to geography at all, — a mere Oriental tract, like the Happy Valley of Rasselas. Others have admitted that there *may* have been an Eden, — a place bearing that name, and capable of location ; but that whether there was such a tract or not is a matter of profound indifference. Others, no less open to the theological character of the first chapters of Genesis, have yet been willing to examine this matter on the side of human learning, as an admirable topic in the department of biblical antiquities, and have spared no pains to solve the question, Where was Eden ?

Looked at in the face, and in the light of the passage in Gen. ii., which describes the land of Eden, the difficulties which grow out of the passage do indeed seem insuperable ; and, in fact, they are pronounced to be so by some of our leading Bible dictionaries. The only passage describing Eden is so brief that I may venture to quote it here from its connection. “ And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden eastward. And a river goeth forth from Eden to water the garden ; and from thence it is divided, and becometh four heads. The name of the first is Pison ; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good : there is the bdellium and the onyx-stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon ; that is it which encompasseth the whole land of Cush [Ethiopia]. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel ; that is it which floweth before Assyria. And the fourth river, that is Euphrates.” Gen. ii. 8-14. Clearly a geographical de-

scription ; clearly a passage meant to convey a definite idea. That it does not is not owing to an intention to perplex, not to any desire to veil a mystical and allegorical subject in terms so obscure as to defy the reader's efforts to locate the site of the story ; not a mere random use of names which were and are still familiar, but, possibly, in a large measure from a want of comprehension of the writer's point of view and his conception of the earth.

Reading the passage as it stands, and interpreting it after the letter, it is utterly unintelligible. With our idea of a river, there is none which answers to the description ; and writers have been led into conjectures which are equally monstrous and ludicrous in their efforts to discover such a river. Submitting the passage to analysis, we see at a glance that it contains certain names which are to be identified beyond doubt with rivers or places known to us : others that are in a measure doubtful. Cush, or Ethiopia, is the name invariably applied in the oldest Scriptures to the highlands of Nubia ; and the Gihon must therefore be the Nile. Assyria is, and has always been, the country through which the Tigris flows ; and Tigris is therefore the modern name of the Hiddekel. The Euphrates, too, is a river unmistakable. These are what would in algebra be called "known quantities." The unknown or uncertain factor is the Pison. But it has been placed by Ritter \* almost beyond question, that Havilah was the gold country through which the Indus flows, and which supplied Ophir, on the western coast of Hindustan, with that mineral. This identifies, though not with absolute certainty, the Pison with the Indus. There are no other ele-

\* See his monograph on Ophir in the *Comp. Geog. of Palestine*, Vol. I.

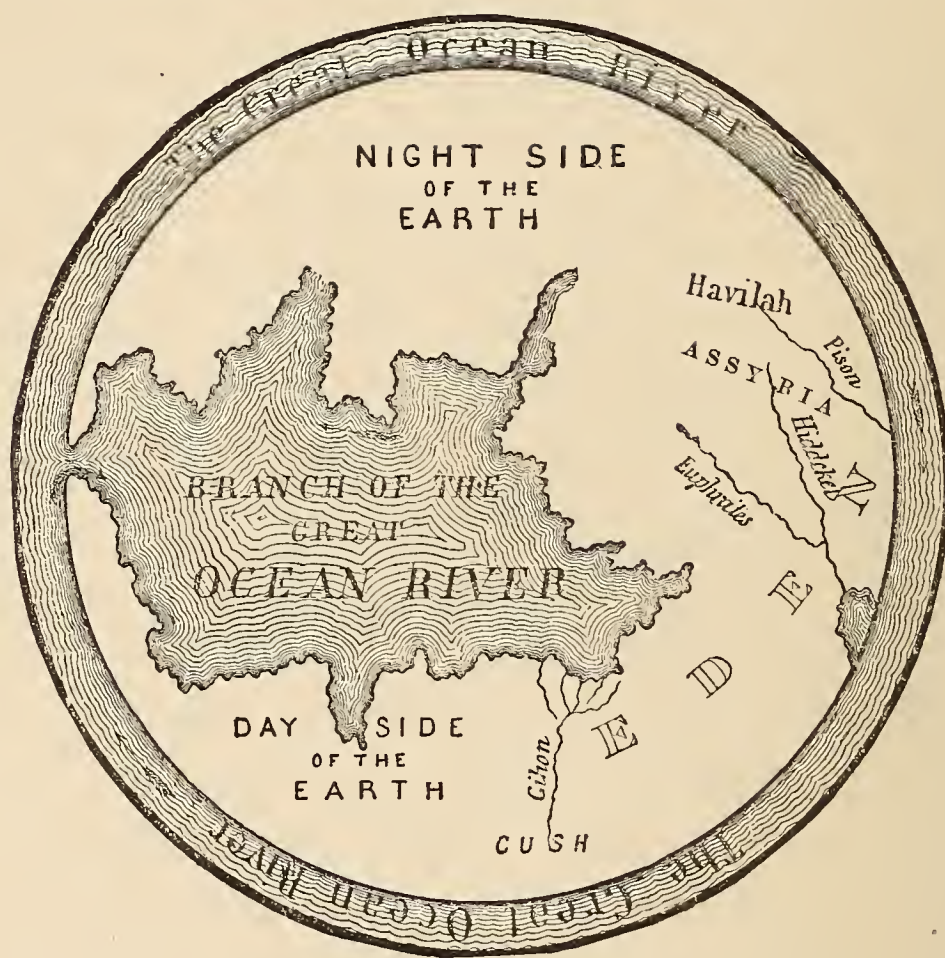


ments ; and the question remains, how to combine four rivers, of which the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris are unquestionably three, and the Indus, almost without doubt, the fourth, so as to conform to the biblical narrative. No wonder it has been the despair of commentators. Some have, on their own authority, founded a Cush on the southern shores of the Caspian, and so made the Gihon identical with the Aras. The arbitrary position pushes them one step farther, and compels them to assume that the little Acampis, a mere summer stream, flowing northward out of Armenia into the Black Sea, is the Pison ; despite the fact that it is no land of gold, bdellium, and the onyx-stone. Besides, not even this forced supposition agrees with the language of the Scripture narrative, — “ a river goeth forth, and is divided, and becometh four heads.”

It were profitless to go into all the conjectural explanations which have been made of this passage, all of them unnatural, hard, and unsatisfactory. But there is a solution possible, and which is almost beyond question tenable and final. It is reached by going back of our time, and looking into the view held by the ancients of the earth and the ocean which surrounds it. The accompanying sketch will be worth more than whole pages in conveying what we mean.

There is enough on this primitive map of the earth to make it intelligible to us. At its heart is the Mediterranean ; at the south, Africa ; at the north, Europe, and at the east, Asia. The whole is seen to be surrounded by that great ocean river, the *Oceanus* of the ancients, so familiarly described by the classic writers of Greece and Rome, and having such close relation to the geography of Eden. The

Romans drew their geographical ideas from the Greeks, and the Greeks and the Hebrews from the Egyptians, that great race of conquerors, who, long before the empires on the Tigris and the Euphrates sprang into being, had carried their victorious arms throughout the known earth. This vast ocean river has one great arm, the Mediterranean ; and that arm has one long finger, the Gihon, or Nile. We differ from



the ancients in this, that while we call bays, gulfs, and seas, arms of the ocean, we do not so designate rivers. They, however, extended our notion, and reckoned rivers elongated arms of the sea. They read nature backward rather than forward, — not from the little rivulet to the great ocean, but from the ocean back to the tiny rill among the mountains. The ocean stream, or river, divided into four heads, the four

great rivers which they knew, — the Nile, Euphrates, Tigris, and Indus. The fertile land on those rivers constituted the most charming region on the earth. It was their Eden ; and those mighty rivers flowed to water it and give it increased fertility.

Somewhere “eastward in Eden” was the scene where the great history of our race began,—the garden of the Bible story. But it is a fatal mistake to suppose that Eden itself was a tract that a man might walk around in a fraction of a day. It was a synonym for all that the Egyptian conquerors and scholars knew that was fair and promising. It embraced the garden of the Nile, the rich, fat land of Mesopotamia, and the charming valley of the Indus. In its scope, it extended over an immense range, and comprised all that a Hebrew writer, “learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,” would regard as fair, productive, and romantic. It embraced, in addition to Egypt and Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, the rich shores of Arabia and Southern Persia. It did not take in the arid wastes which lie between these great rivers, the vast deserts of Asia : there was no occasion for the Scriptures to include them. Eden was only what was most prolific in abundance and beauty. In the undefined East, beyond the Pison, lay the dim and distant Nod, or *Nowhere*, as the word means, — the darkling region into which the first murderer was driven.

I can hardly claim that the preposition “from” in the sentence, “and a river goeth forth *from* Eden,” is entirely clear ; yet, with the notions of the ancients, it would be difficult to substitute any other which would quite satisfy all conditions. The question may be raised, how did the river water the



*garden?* It watered Eden, but how the garden? The answer must be found in the necessity of making the whole account converge in the garden, the scene of the event soon to be related. As the garden is the center of our interest, the whole drift of the passage sets toward it and the events connected with it.



MOUNT ARARAT.

We get no glimpse of any Scripture lands again till the mountains of Ararat come into sight. Here, notwithstanding the interminable disputes of scholars, we need not hesitate to accept that conclusion which seems, on the whole, legitimately reached; viz., that by the "mountains of Ararat" is not meant that lofty double peak in Armenia, which is



crowned with perpetual ice and snows, and is far more indisputably the monarch of that region than is Mt. Blanc of Switzerland ; but that whole highland region south of Ararat, whose height is about six thousand feet, and which rises like a mighty island out of a sea of plain. The popular apprehension makes the great double-capped Ararat answer to the biblical expression "mountains of Ararat ;" but, amid all the difficulties which arise when we try to read the account of Noah by the broad light which we throw on the scenes that are near our own times, there is no one which does greater violence to our sense of probabilities than that which arises when we conceive of the ark's being stranded upon the ice and snow of a mountain more than seventeen thousand feet in height. This mountain was ascended, for the first time among Europeans, by Dr. Parrot, about a half-century since. The sketch of the accompanying engraving was furnished by Rev. Dr. Perkins, the well-known missionary to Armenia, and may be relied upon as accurate. The picture happily gives a good idea of the immense magnitude of the mountain, and itself is the most potent of arguments against the untenable hypothesis which has been reared in favor of its double peak's corresponding to the "mountains of Ararat" of the Scriptures. But while great difficulties stand confessedly in the account of the Deluge, — difficulties which are not met by ridicule, nor overcome by rejecting the whole narrative as puerile, — there is this to be said, that that highland of Armenia which seems to be meant by the phrase, "mountains of Ararat," is admitted to be the most probable spot where the nations of the earth parted from one another, flowing out westward into the Russian and Hungarian plains,

passing south-eastward into India, eastward to the Pacific shores. "The Armenian plateau stands equidistant from the Euxine and the Caspian Seas on the north, and between the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean on the south. These seas were the high-roads of primitive colonization; and the plains watered by the Acampis, Araxes, Tigris, and Euphrates were the seats of the most powerful nations of antiquity,—the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes, and the Colchians. Viewed with reference to the dispersion of the nations, Armenia is the *omphalos* of the world; and it is a singular fact, that Ararat is the great boundary-stone between the empires of Russia, Turkey, and Persia"

The tenth chapter of Genesis takes us to those "mountains of Ararat," the high Armenian plateau, and unfolds the world of unobscured, authentic history, as it was known to those Egyptian geographers, upon whose knowledge the writer of that chapter has so largely drawn. It is one of the most interesting landmarks in the Bible; and it is with a feeling of sensible relief that we emerge from the shadowy vagueness which rests on Eden, Nod, and Ararat, and set foot on the solid ground which comes into view in the tenth of Genesis. It is a chapter which German scholars have loved well. Its evident historical sharpness and accuracy have made them sure that research could not be squandered in vain upon it; and so faithful have been the efforts of such men as Knobel, Ewald, von Bohlen, Hitzig, and Hartmann, that the names specified in that chapter can with great certainty be ascribed to the lands which the descendants of Noah peopled.

We probably owe more of the scientific geography con-

tained in Gen. x. to the conquests of the great Sesostris, as the Greeks call him, or, to use his strict Egyptian name and title, Rhameses the Great, than to any other source. This monarch, one of the greatest conquerors who ever lived, flourished 1400 years before Christ. In his victorious marches, he advanced southward into the mountains of Abyssinia, northward as far as the Don, routing the Scythians there, and eastward, by water, as far as to India. Nor did he content himself with conquering the lands at the mouth of the Indus, but he carried his victorious banners to the Ganges itself. As the result not only of his victories, but of those of his successors, the Hebrew writer of the tenth of Genesis was able to take a wide and accurate survey of the world so far as it was known. The scope of that chapter is too often overlooked by the hasty reader. Instead of being an unmeaning list of names, it is a storehouse of the most valuable geographical facts. What could be more uninteresting at first glance than Gen. x. 2, 3, 4: "The sons of Japheth, — Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer, — Ashkenaz, and Riphate, Tiras, Togarmah. And the sons of Javan, — Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim ;" and yet these verses, and others which sound equally uninteresting, such as 13 and 14, are but the names of places of surpassing interest. In those older days, the names of men were at once transferred to the places which they settled ; just as Washington bears the name of our general, the capital of Ohio that of Columbus, and America that of Americus. The word Tiras, in verse 2, is but a modified form of Thrace, the great tract north of Greece. Madai is but another form of Media ; and Elishah, in verse 4, is but the Greek Elis, or Hellas.



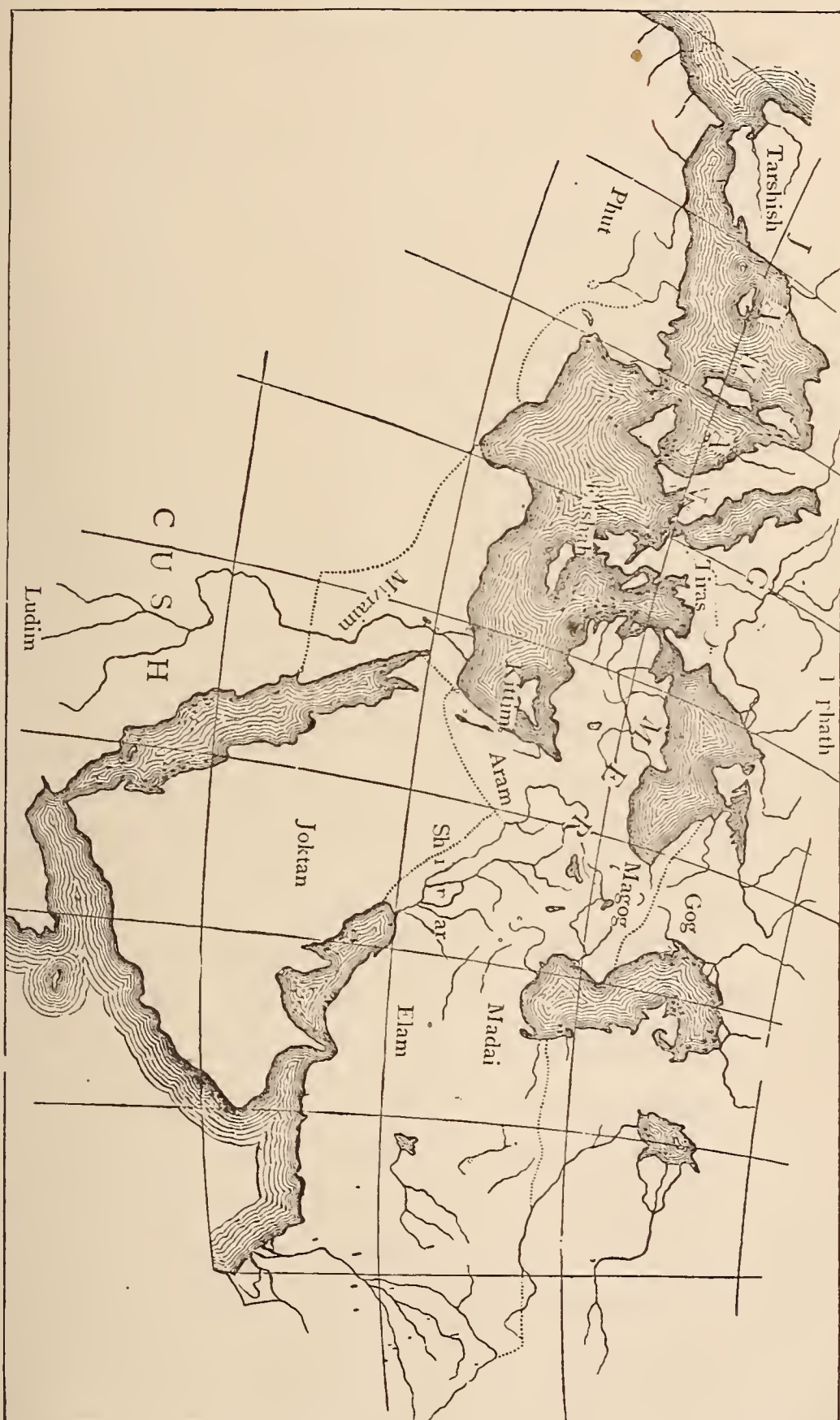
We need not enter, however, upon an exhaustive catalogue of the names contained in the tenth chapter of Genesis. That the special student can better do by having recourse to the pages of two invaluable works, Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and the last edition of Kitto's "Biblical Cyclopaedia ;" works of which it is not too much to say, that they represent the consummate flower of all the biblical studies of the present age, as well as of the past ages. With reason did my friend Dr. Barth, the African traveler, tell me, a short time before his lamented death, that there was almost no book on the shelves of his library which he consulted so frequently as Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." It is indispensable, either in its larger or in its abridged forms, not only to every scholar, but also to every Christian family, unless the scarcely inferior Cyclopaedia of Kitto be used in its stead.

Leaving the details of the tenth chapter, then, to those who may wish to master them, it is not right for me to pass by a general review of the whole field. There is the earth, as it was known to the Egyptians and hence to the Hebrews, divided up into three great divisions, in the main distinct, yet partly overlapping each other. The three sons of Noah, of whom Japheth appears to be the oldest (Gen. x. 21), and Ham the youngest (Gen. ix. 24), went their separate ways : Japheth, the senior, taking the north coast-lands of the Mediterranean, and as far northward as men's knowledge extended, or, as we should say in modern speech, the continent of Europe ; Shem, the second son, taking what we may, for convenience' sake, identify with Asia, — a strip extending from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf ; and Ham, the youngest, receiving Africa, although his numerous



progeny pushed into Asia, overran southern Arabia, and

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE TENTH CHAPTER OF GENESIS.



NOTE. — The limited size of this map precludes any attempt at exhaustive fullness. Those who wish to examine Gen. x. more in detail are referred to Coleman's excellent Bible Atlas, based upon Kiepert.

gained possession of the fertile western shore of Palestine.

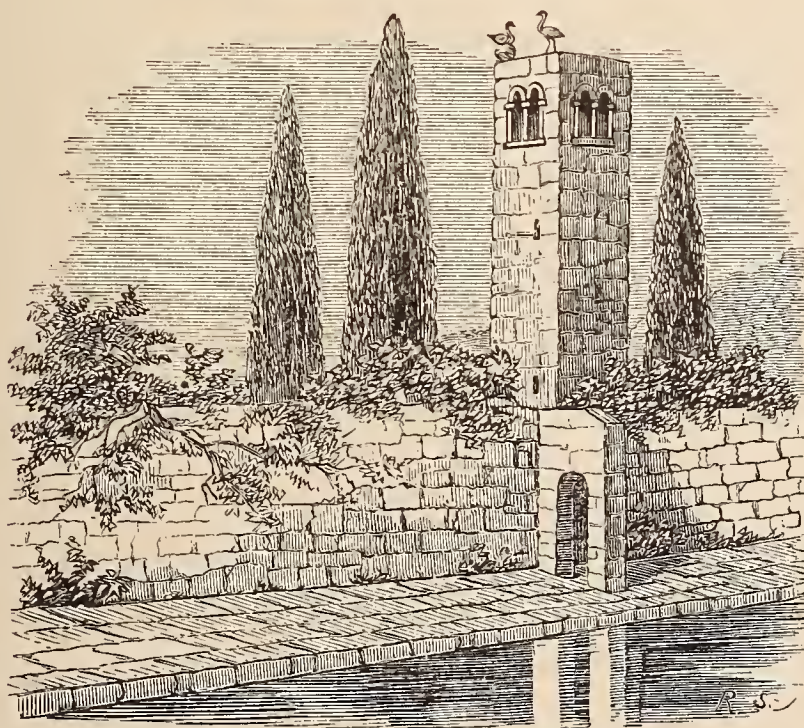
In the tenth of Genesis, the genealogy of Japheth, the elder, comes first, and to his sons are ascribed the coast of the Black Sea, the Islands of the Mediterranean, Greece, Thrace, and the uncertain, distant Tarshish, the remote indefinite West. Northward, they shaded away into Germany and into Russia; for, to the best of our knowledge, the lands called after the names of Ashkenaz, Tubal, Riphath, and Togarmah were the then obscure lands of Central Europe. In the territory of Madai (Media), south of the Caspian Sea, the territory of Japheth impinged upon, or rather overlay, that of Shem, yet without that entanglement which was witnessed farther south between the descendants of Shem and of Ham.

Shem took what was the central portion of that ancient world; and from Arphaxad, the third son of Shem, descended Eber, the progenitor of the mighty race which bore his name, the Ebrews, or Hebrews. The territory which bore the name of Aram we know best as Syria; Arphaxad is the Chaldæa of history; Asshur, slightly changed, is Assyria; Elam is Persia; and Joktan is the fertile Arabia.

Ham's sons were Mizraim, the inheritors of Egypt; Cush, originally the possessor of the south of Egypt, Nubia, and Abyssinia; Phut, the founder of the Barbary tribes and those along the Niger; and Canaan, who, lacking territory on the continent proper, took possession of the western shore of Palestine. The descendants of Cush appear to have early wandered forth from the region of the Blue Nile. Nimrod, the mighty hunter, advanced with victorious tread, and established himself on the banks of the Euphrates, in the heart of the territory of Shem. Others encroached on the Arabian peninsula, and mingled with the descendants of the Shemitic Joktan.



Further than this, I need not go. In our later studies, we shall have occasion here and there to take up the names of the tenth of Genesis. The story of Solomon will bring under review Ophir and Sheba; the Philistine history will cause us to resort to Casluhim, and the Canaanite tribes will be words very familiar to us further on, — the Hittites and Jebusites, the Amoritès, the Girgasites, and all the rest; but for the present we may leave them. Special historical research here is more interesting for its own sake than for the light it throws upon the Bible story: that which we must mainly keep in mind is the development of that line which is perpetuated, not in Japheth and Ham, but in the third son of Shem, Arphaxad, and in Salah, Eber, and the whole Hebrew race that bears his name. From Shem to Abram is a leap of ten generations; and those men, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, and Abram, were all of them doubtless dwellers on the plains of Upper Mesopotamia.



TOWER OF AN ANCIENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH, OORFA (UR).

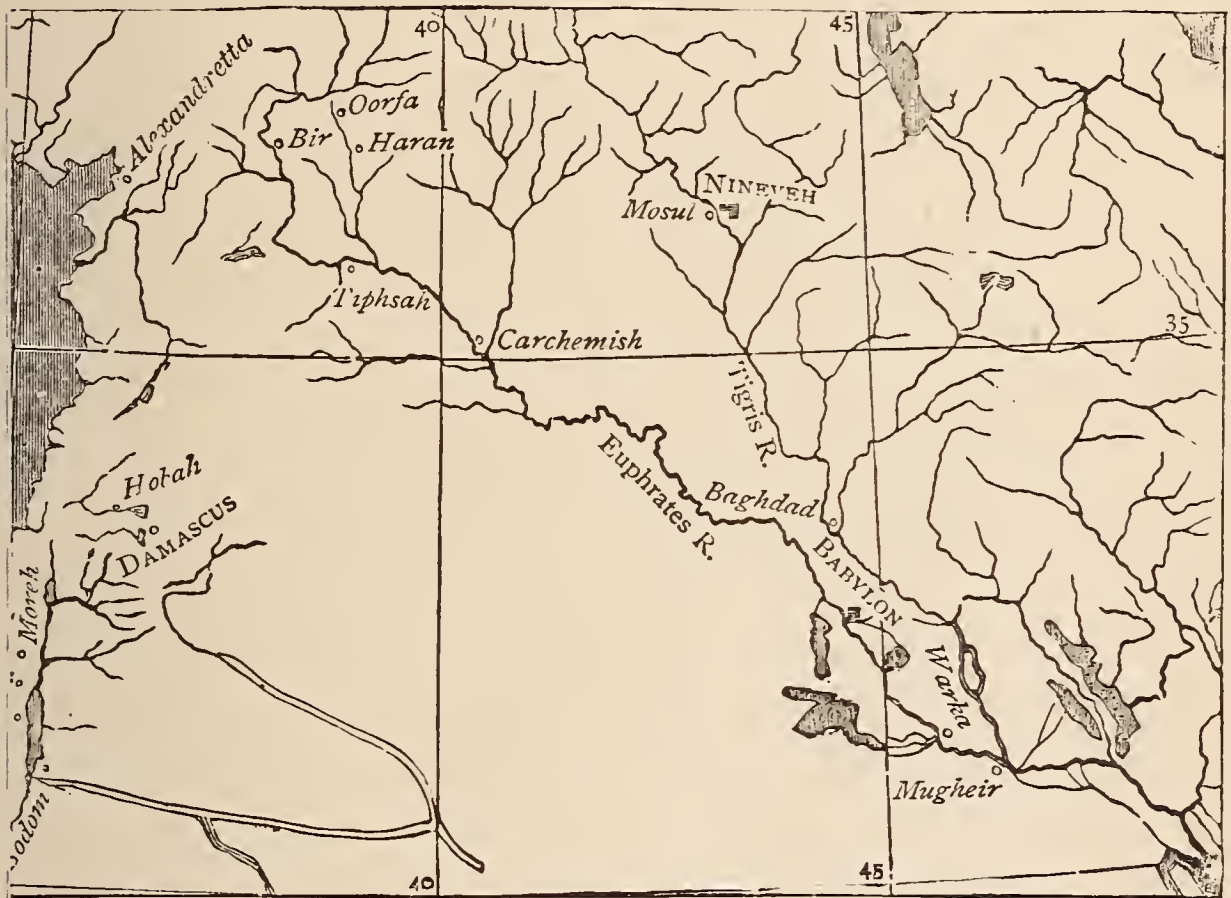
## II.

### THE HOMES OF ABRAHAM.

FOUR spots arranged along the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris contend for the honor of being Ur of the Chaldees. Of these, only two are regarded as having important claims. One of them is Oorfa, otherwise known as Calirrhoe and Edessa, a place of great natural attractiveness, lying in Upper Mesopotamia, about three hundred miles north-east of Damascus. The other is the site of the very ancient city of Mugheir, a short distance above the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates. Stanley, in offering his plea, couched in his peculiar beauty of diction, has not gone quite so far as would be warranted in insisting upon Ur's being in the region at the base of the Armenian mountains. It is now settled, almost beyond dispute, that the region around Edessa was the home of the descendants of Arphaxad, of whom Abraham was one. It is not a little surprising that such a scholar as Rawlinson should ignore the fact, that, to use Stanley's picturesque expression, the name Chaldæa once descended, like a landslip, from the mountains of Armenia to the territory at the head of the Persian Gulf. In the story of Abraham, we have to deal with the primitive Chaldæa, and not with that which comes to view later in the Bible. Rawlinson's argument that Mugheir was Ur, is invalidated by this fact at the outset. Besides, the place which he assigns as Ur of the Chaldees is

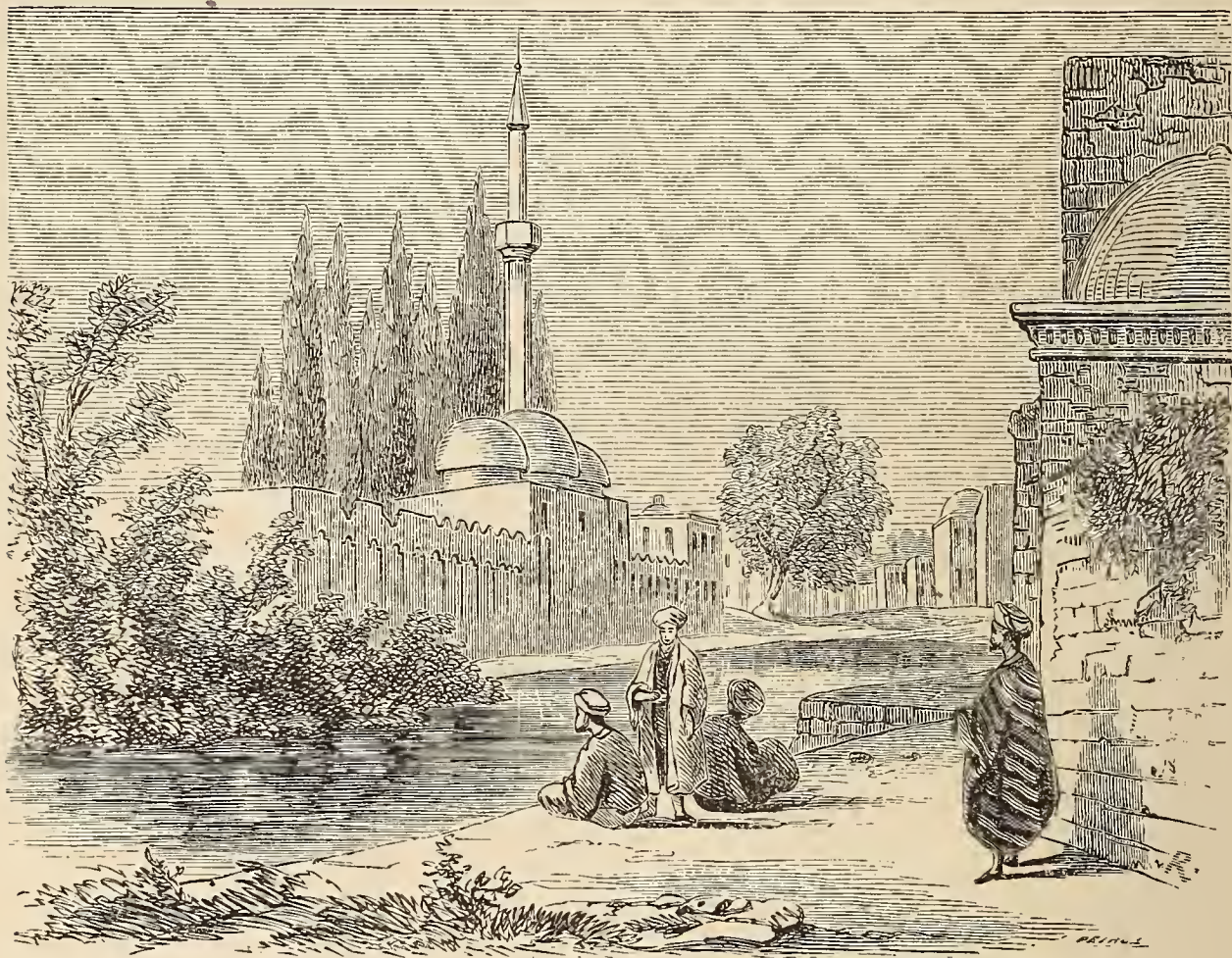


west of the Euphrates ; and we have a distinct implication in the dying speech of Stephen, that Abraham's first home was Mesopotamia, and therefore necessarily east of the Euphrates. To this must be added the fact, that the ruins of Mugheir indicate, that, in the remotest antiquity, the place was a large and populous city, second, indeed, only to Babylon. But assuredly Abraham was not a man whose home had been



in a great and luxurious capital : he was not even a man who lived, or wished to live, within walls. He was a man of simple life, and preferred the shelter of a tent to that of a stone roof. In those days, Oorfa, the subsequent Edessa, was probably, as it is to-day, always surrounded by a nomad population, who gladly accepted its verdurous neighborhood in lieu of the vast sand-plains which stretch away to the south

and west. The place even now is one of the most striking within many miles ; and the profuse spring which the ancient traditions of the place assert to have been the home of Abraham's youth is one which refreshes multitudes of travelers. Oorfa is familiar to a portion of the Christian public as a mission station of the American Board.



POOL OF ABRAHAM, OORFA.

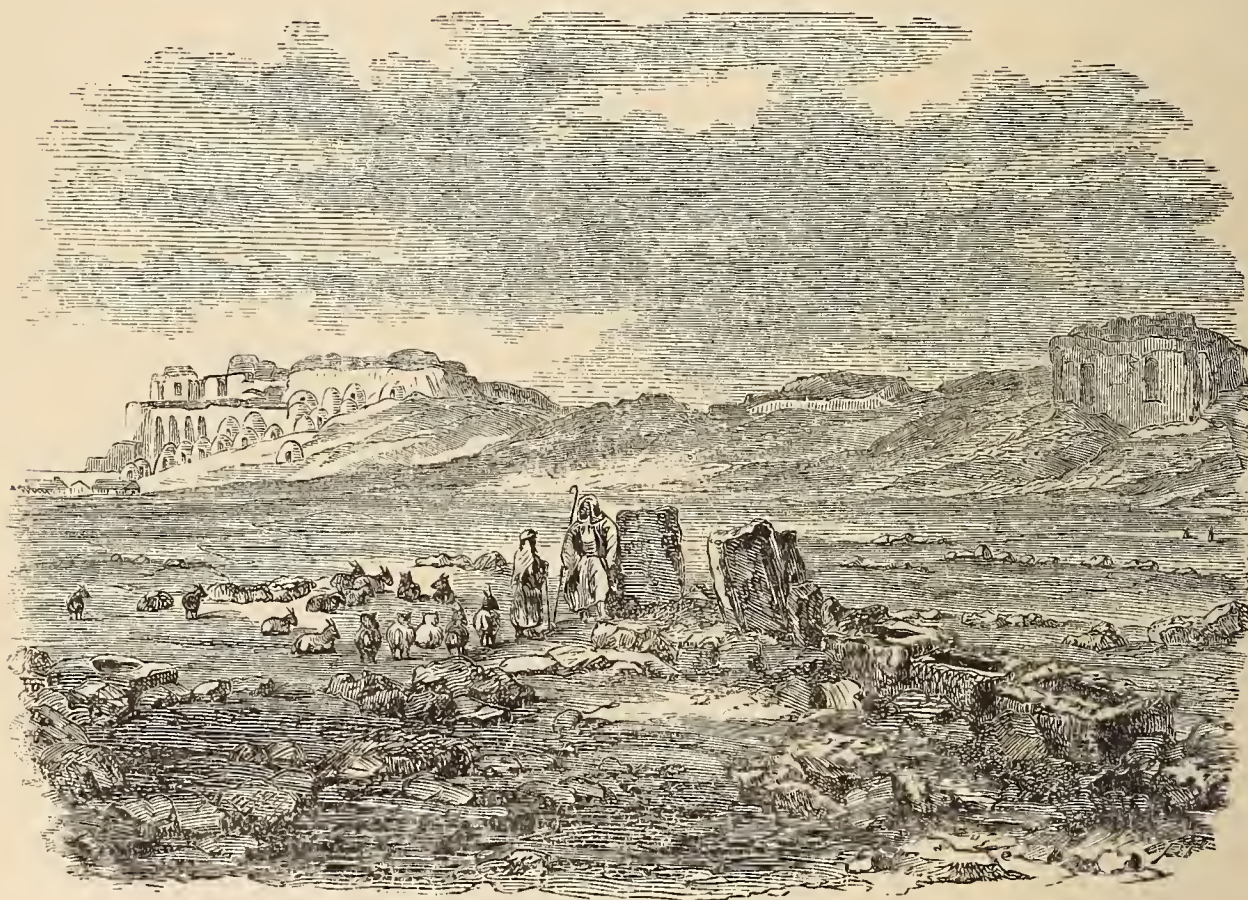
About twenty miles south of Ur, lay Haran. Its situation has always been known ; for although the region is a desolate one, — a range of sandy and unproductive waste, — yet it was at the junction of three important caravan routes : one toward the Tigris ; another to the great towns on the Euphrates ; and a third south-west, toward Damascus and



Syria. In classic history, it has its interest as the scene of Crassus' defeat by the Parthians : a battle brought about, doubtless, by the same cause which made it the object of Abraham's first wandering, — its location in relation to the great highways of travel. Dr. Beke's conjecture, that Haran is to be identified with a village of the same name about ten miles east of Damascus, is ingenious, and has much to recommend it; but it is, I think, open to fatal objections. The argument drawn from the name is no more valid than that which applies to the Haran of Mesopotamia; for both sites perpetuated the ancient name. On the other hand, the distinct reference to the Euphrates in Joshua xxiv. 2, 3, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood (or river) in old times. . . And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood;" the clear intimation conveyed in Stephen's dying speech (Acts vii. 2-4), as well as the explicit statement (Gen. xxiv. 10) that Haran, the home of Rebekah, was in Mesopotamia, taken in connection with the clause with which Gen. xx. 9 opens ("Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the East"), — make it almost certain that Dr. Beke's conjecture, that Haran was only ten miles east of Damascus, is an untenable one. The distance which Laban had to traverse in pursuing Jacob is stated to have been a seven days' journey. From Haran to Gilead, where the fugitive was overtaken, is a distance of three hundred and fifty miles. Of course, fifty miles a day is altogether more than the usual distance traversed by Eastern caravans; yet if it be true, that the post caravans are but eight days in passing from Damascus to Bagdad, a distance of five hundred miles, surely the deter-

mined and well-furnished Laban could accomplish three hundred and fifty miles in seven days.

From Haran, Abraham, with Sarai his wife, and Lot his nephew, turned to a new home. A voice, stronger than his own inclination, bade him go toward the south-west, and enter into the land of Canaan. In the journey thitherward, the numerous party does not appear to have made any stay



MODERN HARAN.

at Damascus ; although that ancient city was standing then, and was visited by Abraham not long after. There was no halt till they reached the fertile plain of Moreh, the Sichem, or Shechem, of a later age. That fertile vale, the beautiful garden of Palestine even at the present day, whose gushing brooks and green fields call forth every traveler's enthusiasm as he approaches the city of Nablüs, had power to check the



onward progress, even of Abraham, for a season ; “ and there he builded an altar unto the Lord.”

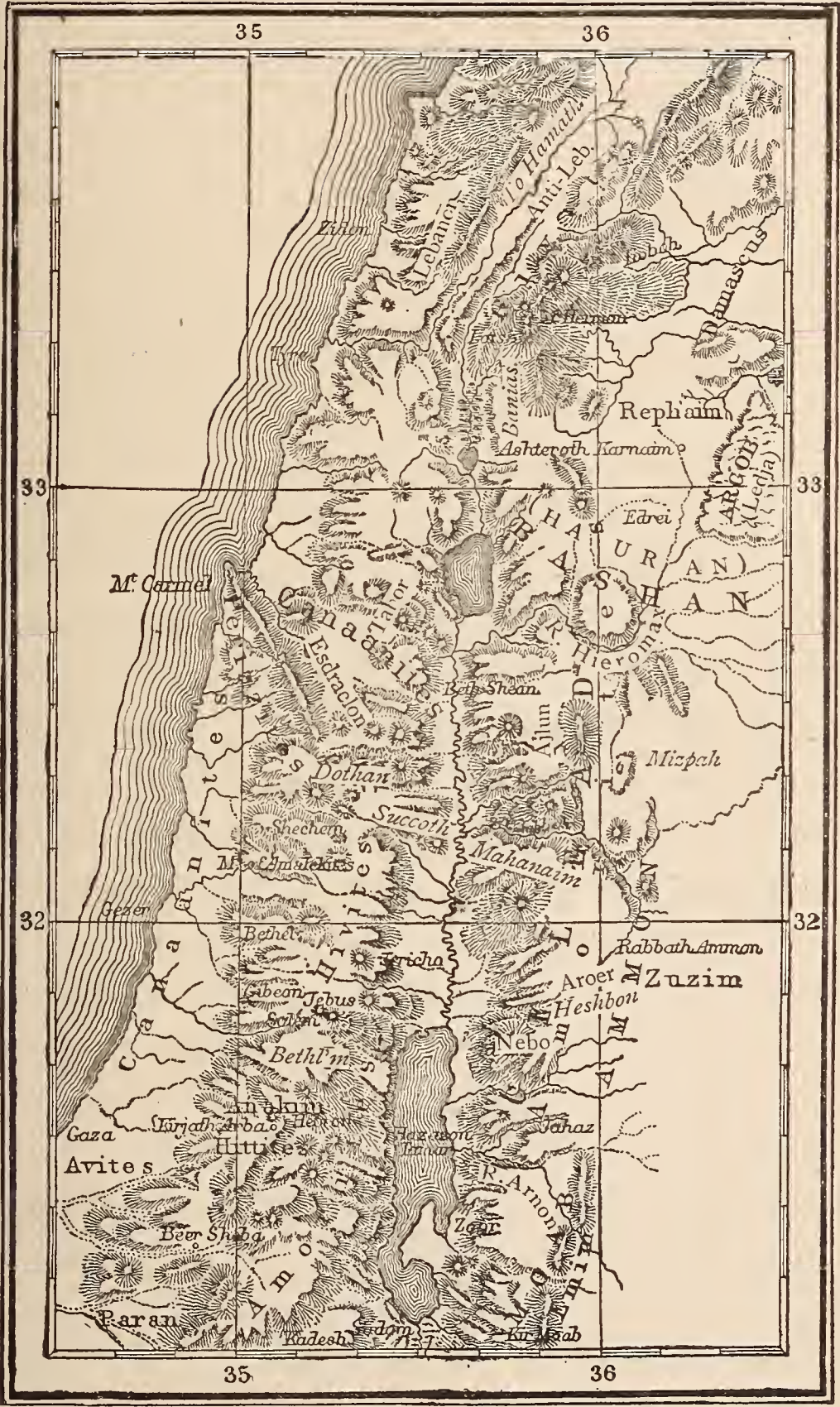
Yet he did not settle there with any permanence, but passed onward toward the south, that he might survey the whole extent of the territories which had been allotted to him and to his seed after him. It was a great change, to pass from the sheltered vale between Gerizim and Ebal to the bleak hill-sides and uninviting patches of pasturage along the top of that mass of rock which stretches from the vale of Esdraelon to the desert, with ever-decreasing fertility as one advances toward the south. Yet onward he went, surveying the land, and erected another altar on a rounded hill, or “ mountain,” to use the Bible word (Gen. xii. 8), south-east of that village or city of Bethel, whose ruins, bearing the name Beitin, have been described by our own Robinson, and may be seen by any traveler going northward from Jerusalem. Stanley says, in his graphic way (“ Syria and Palestine,” p. 214), “ Immediately east of the low gray hills on which the Canaanitish Luz and the Jewish Bethel afterward stood, rises — as the highest of a succession of eminences, each now marked by some vestige of ancient edifices — a conspicuous hill, its topmost summit resting, as it were, on the rocky slopes below, and distinguished from them by the olive grove which clusters above its broad surface. From this hight, thus offering a natural base for the patriarchal altar, and a fitting shade for the patriarchal tent, Abraham and Lot must be conceived as taking a survey of the country, which can be enjoyed from no other point in the neighborhood. To the east, there rises the jagged range of the hills above Jericho ; in the distance, the dark wall of Moab ; between them lies the

wide valley of the Jordan, its course marked by the tract of forest in which its rushing stream is enveloped ; and down to this valley, a long and deep ravine, now as always the main line of communication from the central hills of Palestine. To the south and west, the view commanded the bleak hills of Judæa ; and, in the far distance, the southern range, on whose slope is Hebron. Northward are the hills which divide Judæa from the rich plains of Samaria. This is the view which was to Abraham what Pisgah was afterward to his great descendant. This was to the two lords of Palestine, then almost ‘free before them where to choose,’ what in Grecian legends is represented under the figure of the Choice of Hercules ; in the fables of Islam, under the story of the prophet turning back from Damascus.” From that height, Lot turned down to the rich but enervating valley of the Jordan, while Abraham cast a lingering look “northward and southward, and eastward and westward,” over the country which was to be his ; not rich and promising and attractive, like those fertile plains where Lot’s descendants were to live ; and yet where the clear, dry air, and the need of industry and frugality, were to develop a race far superior to that which might be nursed in a land of greater plenty, but where there should be little stimulus to healthful labor.

But there was little at Bethel which could sustain the flocks of Abraham ; true, it was forest-crowned, and not bare, as the same hill is to-day ; yet he must still press southward. One season of famine drove him to Egypt for temporary supplies ; but, lest another should arise, he must seek him a new home. He made no stay till he reached Hebron. Under the terebinths upon the plains of Mamre, north of Hebron,



was the scene of his next altar to the Lord, the huge trees,



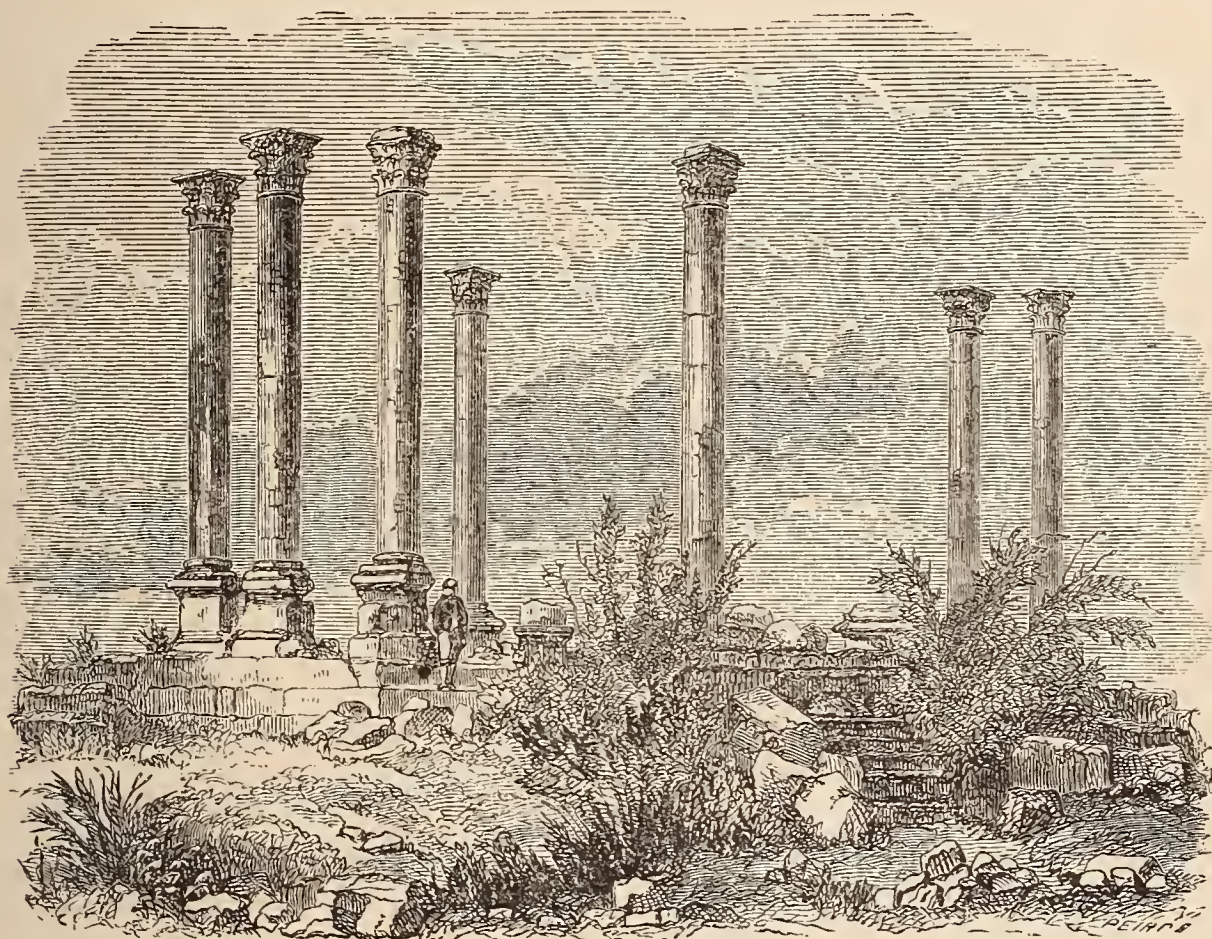
here as at Shechem and Bethel, being the protection which

he courted, and their shade the hallowed temple where he worshiped.

As his brief residence at Bethel was characterized by the flight into Egypt, and the temporary sojourn there till the stress of the famine had passed, so was his residence at Mamre interrupted by the rude hand of war. The sultry but luxuriant shores of the Dead Sea and the sunken valley of the Jordan had drawn thither four kings, whose territories lay in what was the later land of Chaldæa, the territory near the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and on the border of the Persian Gulf. We have their names, — Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations. The power which they were able to bring into the field gave them the victory ; and they brought under a subjection which lasted twelve years the five kings of the five cities of the plain, — Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar. The rebellion of these rulers in the thirteenth year of their subjection brought the kings once more from their eastern home, and this time with stronger armies, and bent on a larger measure of conquest. The province which they ravaged, and whose population they smote down, extended from the base of Hermon to a district south of the Dead Sea. They first fell upon the Rephaim, or giants, in that interesting land so recently brought to light by the researches of Porter, Graham, and Wetstein, southward of Hermon, and in the most rocky province of the fertile Bashan. Ashteroth Karnaim was the name of the first city which was sacked, — a place which Porter, never rash in claiming more than is just, believes to still exist, little changed in outward form from that which it bore when the Rephaim were its tenants.



Advancing southward, the Zuzim were the next to fall. Their home lay east of Jericho, on the high plain back from the Jordan, where it enters the Dead Sea. Then the Emim, a race who lived farther south, fell before these conquering kings from the east. They do not at once double the southernmost extremity of the sea and advance northward, but



RUINS OF A TEMPLE AT KENATH. (Ashteroth Karnaim.)

march forty miles still farther south, and conquer the Horites, the dwellers in Mount Seir, the race that held the valley of Petra, and the romantic defiles of that region, even before the time when Ishmael held them as his.

We are now, as you see, in the very dawn of history. That territory of the Rephaim at Ashteroth Karnaim has not yet acquired its familiar name of Bashan ; the Zuzim and

Emim have not yet given way to the Ammonites and the Moabites ; and the Horites of Seir have not yet receded before the more powerful Edomites. That time is the very morning of history ; and, scanty as is our knowledge, we should be grateful that the limits are clear enough to enable us to follow the victorious marches of kings whose names and conquests antedate all mention of Jerusalem. From Seir, we can trace these eastern leaders, of whom Chedorlaomer appears to have been chief, across the Arabah Valley, that long, terrible, blasted gorge, running from the Dead Sea southward to the eastern arm of the Red Sea, across this trough, and for a little way into the upland of Paran ; then they came down to the lower land again, and drank of the waters of En-mishpat, afterwards to be so familiar as Kadesh. Radiating thence, they went on with their destructive work, subduing the Amalekites, or the people of the Sinai Peninsula, and then the Amorites, or inhabitants of the hill country west of the Dead Sea, and round about the place then known as Hazezon-tamar, but familiar to us as Engedi. Then, after completing this work of desolation, cutting off all who might have been the natural allies of the cities of the plain, they once more swept down on those five important places, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar, and not only took away the goods of the people, but, confounding Abraham's nephew Lot and his family with the inhabitants proper, they took them captive, and confiscated all their goods. Where these cities lay it is not hard to tell, though the precise site of each is no longer to be identified. Modern explorers have generally identified the name Sodom with Usdum, the salt mountain at the southern extremity of the



Dead Sea. Zoar, which is stated to have been near Sodom, is placed by Robinson's high authority at the mouth of Wady Kerak, on the south-eastern shore of the sea, where the well-known Lisan peninsula is connected with the mainland. Nor is Robinson's reasoning discarded by the supposition of the learned but fanciful De Saulcy, who identifies Zoar with some ruins on the western shore of the Dead Sea, not far from Engedi. The shallowness of the southern portion of the sea has suggested the theory that the flats, over which boats sail with some difficulty, were once a fertile plain, and that they were studded with those five cities whose names are suggestive of extreme luxury, debauchery, and overwhelming destruction. North of the spot where the peninsula extends into the sea from the east, the depth is very great, not far from thirteen hundred feet; and even close to the shore where the Arnon enters, there are eleven hundred feet soundings. But south of the strait that connects the part north of the peninsula with that south of it, the water shoals at once, there being but from twelve to eighteen feet; and in the year 1818, the English travelers, Irby and Mangles, report having found a ford from the peninsula to the southwest shore of the sea. No wonder that the theory occurred to Robinson, therefore, that this may once have been the "plain," and that, in that great commotion of the elements which effected the destruction of the cities, the water submerged their site, and covers it even to the present day. Still, the researches of geologists do not confirm this view. There are no marks of any upheaval or depression there which did not affect the whole Ghor, from the Sea of Galilee to the Red Sea. Notwithstanding the discovery of occasional





not coeval with the geologic age when that wondrous chasm was formed, from northern Palestine to the Gulf of Akabah. On the contrary, the evidence is decisive that the waters of the Dead Sea were once, even within the range of human history, deeper than they are now ; that evaporation has for centuries been in excess of the amount flowing in, and that the flats at the southern extremity were once submerged more than at present. The nature of the beach, the logs found there, the marks on the rocks, show that once the Dead Sea stood at a higher level than now. And certainly the amount poured into the Jordan is less than it was when Palestine was a wooded country, where rains were abundant, and where pasture was found on every hill-side. The stream is constantly becoming less and less ; and, under the present political rule of the country, the neglect of cultivation tends to make it smaller and smaller still. Not till trees shall once more grow on Bethel and on the mountains of Gilboa can the Jordan flow with its old volume ; and it can not be many years from the present time before the Dead Sea will begin to

Bahr Lût (Sea of Lot), SALT SEA. Gen. xiv. 3.

Beit-lahm (House of Flesh), BETHLEHEM (House of Bread).

El'al, ELEALBH. Num. xxxii. 37.

El Khulil (the Friend, *i. e.* Abraham), HEBRON, KIRJATH-ARRA.

El Kuds (the Holy), JERUSALEM, JEBUS.

Er Ram, RAMAH. 1 Kings xv. 17 : Jer. xxxi. 15.

Er Riha, JERICHO.

Hesban, HESHBON.

Jebel Tur, MT. OF OLIVES.

Jebel Kuruntul, MT. QUARANTANIA, traditional Mount of Temptation. Directly west of Er Riha.

Jebel Usdum, from the city SODOM.

Kerak, KIR-MOAB. Isa. xv. 1.

Kurmul, CARMEL. 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

Mâ'in, BAAL-MEON. Num. xxxii. 38.

Neby Samwil (Prophet Samuel), MIZPEH. Sam vii. 5-12.

Rabba, RABBATH-MOAB, AR. Num. xxi. 28.

Selwan, named from the fountain SILOAM.

Tekûa, TEKOA. Amos i. 1.

Tell Arâd (Hill Arad), ARAD. Num. xxi. 1.

Tell Mâ'in (Hill Main), MAON. 1 Sam. xxv. 2.

Tuleil-el-Fûl, GIBEAH. Judg. xix. 12 ; 1 Sam. xv. 34.

Wady Kelt, BROOK CHERITH (Ker't). 1 Kings xvii. 3.

Wady Kerak, BROOK ZERED. Deut. ii. 14.

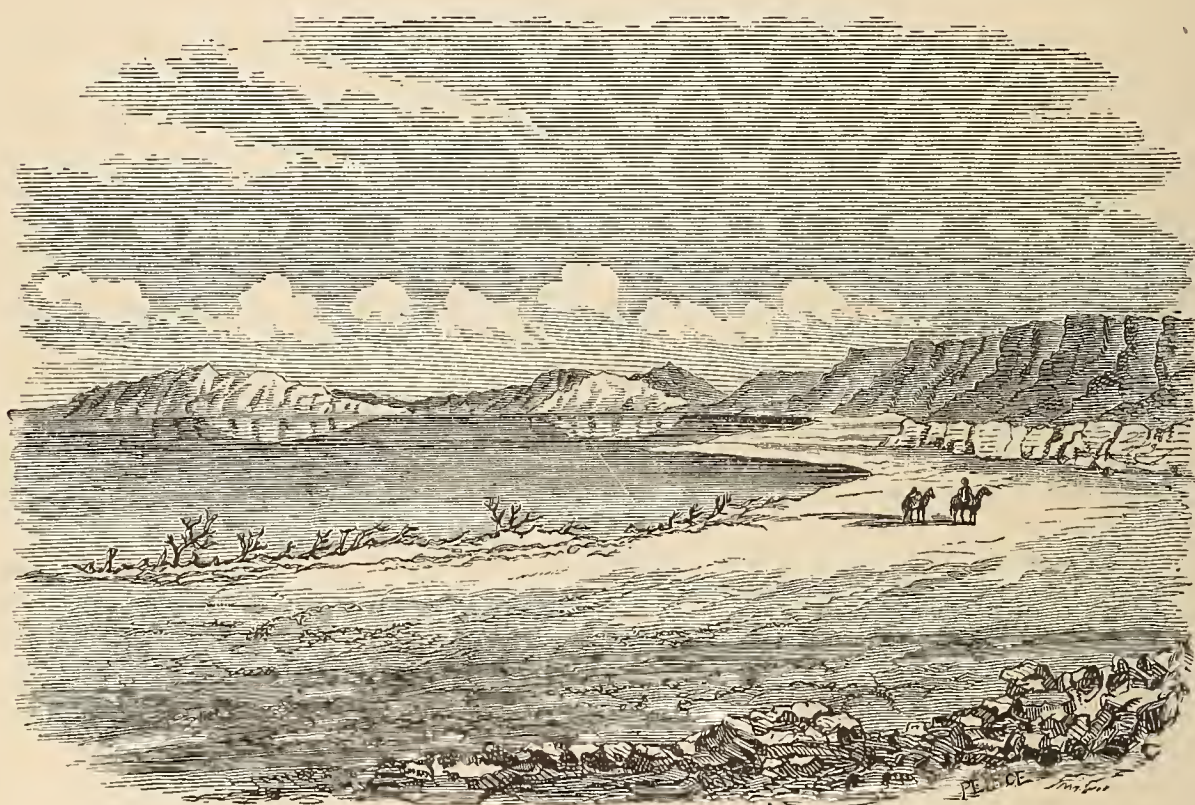
Wady Mojeb, R. ARNON. Deut. ii. 24.

Wady Rahib, BROOK KIDRON.

Yutta, JUTTAH. Josh. xv. 55.

sensibly show the effect of evaporation, and disclose to the light of day that submerged tract which Robinson conjectured to be the site of the cities of the plain.

Scarcely less tenable than is Robinson's theory that four of the five "cities of the plain" (Zoar being excepted) occupied the flats at the southern end of the Dead Sea, where the water is but a few feet deep, is the theory promulgated by Mr.



SOUTH SHORE OF THE DEAD SEA.

Grove, in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," and re-affirmed by Mr. Tristram in his excellent "Land of Israel," that the five cities lay in the plains north of the Dead Sea, and near the site of Jericho. Dr. Wolcott has so triumphantly proved the incorrectness of Mr. Grove's and Mr. Tristram's theory, in "The Bibliotheca Sacra" for January, 1868, that the question must be considered settled in accordance with the old view, that they lay contiguous to the southern extremity of the sea.



Placing Zoar at the mouth of Wady Kerak, and close to the Lisan peninsula which juts into the Dead Sea from the east, we have little doubt that the other four cities lay somewhere on that dry, salt-incrusted plain, ten miles in length by six in breadth, which separates the southern end of the sea from the salt cliffs of Usdum. The soil of that plain, though now entirely arid, and presenting a most cheerless aspect, is, when examined a foot or two beneath the surface, found to contain the elements of the greatest fertility, and to have been capable, at some previous day, to have supported a luxuriant vegetation.\*

Chedorlaomer, and the eastern kings who accompanied him from the banks of the Euphrates, skirted nearly the whole of the Dead Sea, therefore, before they made their second descent upon the cities of the plain. We saw them last victorious over the Amorites at Hazezon-tamar, or Engedi, on the western side of the sea. It was but a short march thence across the rough country to the fertile plain at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea.

When Abram heard that Lot was a captive, and that his goods had been carried away by the indiscriminating captors, he swept down, as you remember, from his temporary home under the oaks of Mamre, and, with his three hundred and eighteen servants, pursued the fugitives, and brought his nephew and his nephew's family and goods back in safety.

\* So entire was my confidence in the accurate judgment of my friend, Mr. Grove, unquestionably one of the first, if not the very first, of living biblical geographers, that in my Lowell Institute lectures on Biblical Geography I cited, without hesitation, his and Mr. Tristram's view of the sites of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim. To Dr. Wolcott's admirable scholarship and acuteness, and to his friendly offices, I owe the power to correct the impressions given in the Lowell Institute course.



It is not hard to trace his course. There is little doubt that he plunged quickly up the hill-ridge of Palestine, past the sites of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, past Shechem and the plain of Esdraelon. The first place where we find him again is at the hill of Dan, at the head waters of the Jordan, and at the foot of Hermon. Thence on he pushes, passes Damascus, and routs the enemy finally at Hobah, a place whose location we know with probable exactness, and which lay a little further north than Damascus, at the eastern base of the Anti-Lebanon range. The return of the conqueror, and his reception by the rulers of the southern portion of Palestine, is made especially interesting, because it brings into view, for the first time, what appears to be the city of Jerusalem. Its king was one of those who acknowledged his indebtedness to the ability of Abraham and his three hundred and eighteen brave men. That strong rock of Salem, but a few miles from the rocky home of the Amorites on the west coast of the Dead Sea, had not been attacked. Thus early in the world's history do we get a glimpse of Jerusalem. Little remains of the places whose names or sites I have mentioned ; but those of the places named in chapters xiii. and xiv. of Genesis are still familiar to us and daily in our mouths, — Hebron, Jerusalem, the Salem of that elder day, and Damascus at the north : all of them indebted to nature for those characteristics which make their existence there not a transient but a permanent thing ; the fertility of the vales around Hebron ; the natural strength of the rock which was Melchisedek's capital, and the profuse waters, which, flowing down from the Anti-Lebanon, must always have made Damascus outwardly what it is to-day.

Very striking is the relation which Abraham sustained to the early inhabitants of Palestine, compared with that which arose when Joshua swept into the country, and was resisted as an invader. I see no marked reason for believing with some, that those tribes, whose names are so familiar to us, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites, were naturally more placable in that early day than they were when they resisted the Hebrews, and were subjected to such fearful slaughter. The account of Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah is extremely beautiful, and the conduct of Ephron and the other Hittites was punctiliously courteous ; yet, had Abraham claimed the land at the point of the sword, I doubt not he would have encountered opposition no less resolute that did Joshua. The members of the patriarchal retinue had not expanded into the vastness which they assumed after the long sojourn in Egypt. Isaac's servants were embroiled in frequent dissensions with the adherents of Abimelech, it is true, but never so as to lead to open war. Abraham was even more fortunate. Strong in the valor of his dependants, he was looked upon as a valuable ally rather than a formidable rival ; and so he lived quietly for many years on those open plains of Mamre, hard by Hebron, and, so far from quarreling with his Hittite neighbors, their intercourse was always mutually assuring. It is noticeable, that, in respect to civilization, Abraham was inferior to the Canaanites. Ephron and his fellows lived in a walled town ; and the compact regarding the sale of the cave was confirmed at the gate, just as is the case with all transactions even at the present day. Abraham, however, lived in tents, a true sheikh, like those who may be seen even now. Notwith-

standing his possible acquaintance with the architecture of the cities on the Euphrates and the Tigris, notwithstanding his sojourn amid the luxury of Egypt, he, and his children after him, clung to their tents and their nomadic life. How long he tarried in Egypt we do not know; but for thirteen years he dwelt just outside the gates of Hebron, and yet the habits of a higher civilization had no charms for him. In estimating his never-failing conviction that the whole land was to fall into the hands of his descendants, it should not be forgotten that Abraham, the wandering sheikh of Chaldæa, was obviously inferior to those who held the soil. He might be of assistance in repelling the attacks of such lawless chieftains as Chedorlaomer and the rest; but he was an Arab sheikh, honest, valiant, frugal, just such a man as was that kindly Saleh, who, thirty years ago, guided Robinson across the Sinai desert. That faith which was "imputed to him as righteousness" was entirely consistent with his simple, inartificial life. The civilization of Sodom was inextricably bound up with its impiety; and there is no antagonism whatever between the life of old Father Abraham, spent in tents and among flocks and herds, and that trust in God which led him away from his home, "not knowing whither he went," and which made him so much more than Robinson's Saleh was, that, whereas the latter is only remembered as kindly and benignant, the former is known as the "Father of the Faithful."

The next and last home of Abraham is in and around Beersheba, a few miles farther to the south, and then as now on the frontier line between Palestine and the land known in Scripture as the south country. Here he digged those wells,



which, enlarged and renewed from time to time, and cleansed from the light sand which otherwise would have choked them, are to be seen at the present day. They were first brought



BEERSHEBA.\*

\* Rev. H. B. Tristram, in his recent and admirable work, *The Land of Israel*, from which this engraving is copied, says, "The well at which we were camped was twelve and a half feet in diameter, thirty-four feet till we reached the living rock ; and, as we were told by the Arabs, twice that depth. At present, the water stood at thirty-eight feet from the surface. The native visitors to our camp pointed out, with all the pride of race, that the wells were the work of "Abraham the Friend." The well above the rock was built with finely-squared large stones, hard as marble ; and the ropes of water-drawers for four thousand years have worn the edges of the hard limestone with no less than one hundred and forty-three flutings, the shallowest of them four inches deep. The ancient marble troughs are arranged at convenient distances round the mouth, in an irregular circle, some oblong, most of them round, for the convenience of the cattle. From their style and material, they are probably coeval with the original well. All day long our men, or the Bedouin herdsmen and their wives, were drawing water in skins, and filling these troughs for the horses, camels, and sheep, recalling many a scene in the lives of the patriarchs, of Rebecca, and of Zipporah." p. 373.

to light by the great German traveler, Seetzen, in 1806, who recognized in the Bir es Saiba of the natives the Beersheba of the Bible. Yet Seetzen was unable to visit the place ; but the clew which he gave was followed up twenty years later by our own countryman, the illustrious Robinson, who explored the place, and who has given us, in the somewhat dry but almost always exact language of his *Biblical Researches*, the result of his investigations. Robinson saw two wells there ; but Van de Velde, a more recent and very accurate observer, discovered five. During the past five centuries, the place has been unknown : no traveler has sought for its traces. Still, from the time of Abraham down to the middle ages, Beersheba appears to have been a place of some importance ; not a large town, indeed, but one whose name is often met. Lying, as it did, just on the outskirts of civilization, it served as a garrison town ; and such it appears to have been at the time of its last mention in history. The traces of the place can be seen at the present time : still, the disintegrating influences of time have been so effective, that not much is left but the faintest indication that a city was ever there. The name Beersheba, retained perfectly in the Bir es Saiba of the Arabs, clings to the ancient wells ; and there is no possible doubt that here was the last home of Abraham.



COIN FROM OORFA.



### III.

#### JACOB AND THE "SOUTH COUNTRY."

SOUTH of Beersheba the hills fade away, and are lost in the rolling country which stretches onward to the distant mountain-land lying on the northern part of the great Et Tih plateau. As one passes up from the Sinaitic Wilderness into the hill country of Palestine, he notices, in the last twenty miles before reaching Beersheba, the symptoms of a change. The aromatic shrubs of the desert gradually disappear, and grass takes its place. There are no trees, and yet the ground loses its almost fearfully sterile look, and begins to put on the first indications of fertility. Of all the travelers who have written of this south country, no other one has traced its features with the tender fidelity of Bonar, the Scotch poet and preacher, in his "Desert of Sinai" and "Land of Promise," — both excellent and admirable works.

Not that there is much that can detain the traveler for any length of time : its resources are very slight, and its features are not striking. Yet, as the home of Abraham for an exceedingly attractive part of his life, as the home of Isaac and of Jacob for a part of theirs, it is one of the most interesting regions mentioned in the Bible. It is not yet, strange to say, thoroughly explored. While there is scarcely a *wady* between Dan and Beersheba which has not been examined with a certain degree of care, the south country is known



only as it has been traversed by the caravan routes of the desert. The two hasty tours made a few years ago by Rev. Mr. Rowland, in search of Kadesh, lasting but three or four days each, are almost the only ones which have been made south of Beersheba, except by those who have had occasion to cross the region. And discredited as Mr. Rowland apparently must be, in respect to his alleged discovery of the site of Kadesh, and the fancied identification of the well which he encountered in the desert with the one which Hagar stum-



THE "SOUTH COUNTRY."

bled upon when famished and at the door of death, still the remarks which he makes show, that, in spite of the distempered enthusiasm with which he recounts his explorations, there is a rich field for the researches of a learned, careful, and zealous man. Yet, even with such exploration, there is no startling mystery in that south country which will be brought to light. We know, almost beyond question, that the country where Abraham lived was at Beersheba and in its immediate vicinity; that Isaac went westward to Gerar, and dugged his numerous wells up and down the course of

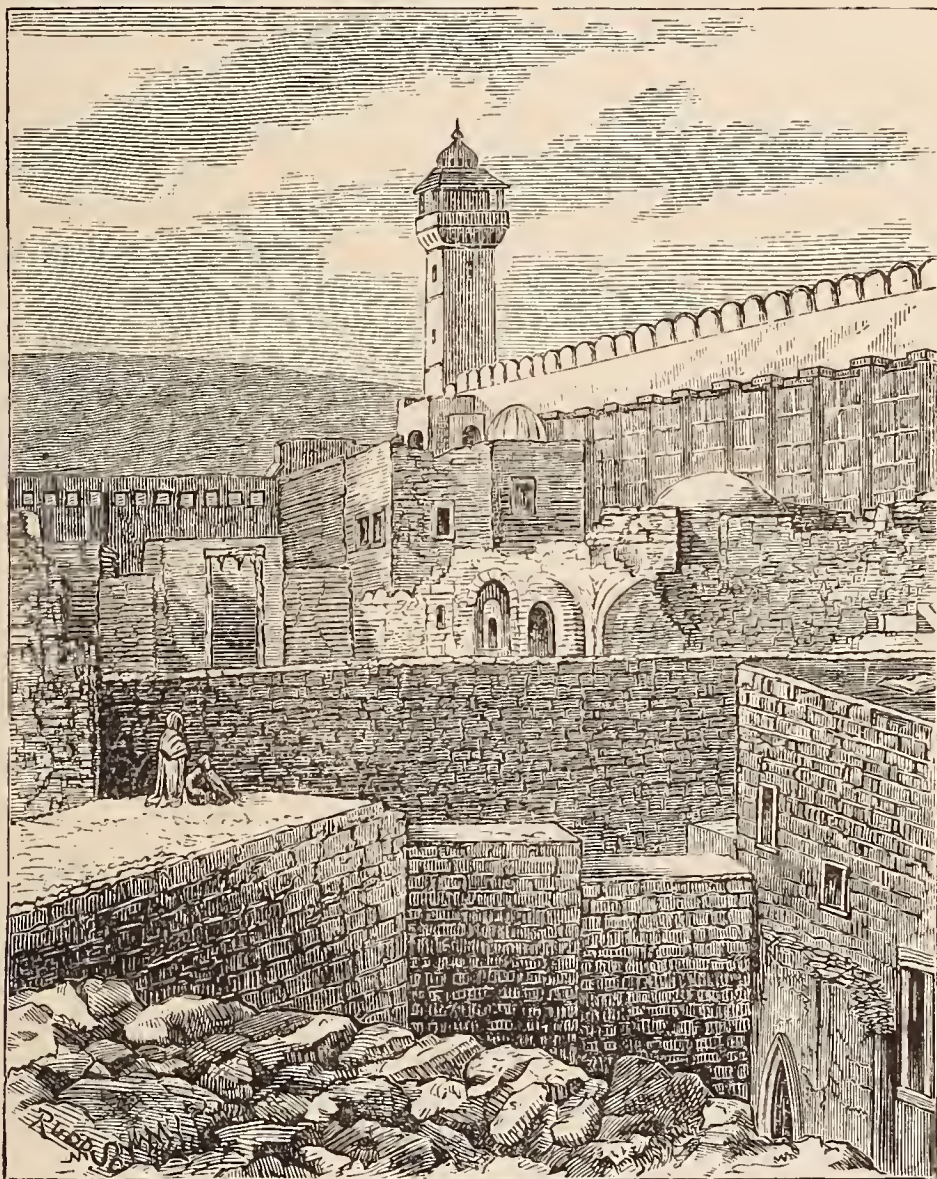
Wady Sheriah, a broad and shallow watercourse a few miles south-east of Gaza, and running toward the latter city. Very careful research might bring to light the wells which the provident and domestic Isaac dugged, — the sources of such frequent controversy between his herdsmen and those of the Philistine king. Even to the present day, wells are the most valuable possession of the Arab tribes ; and no contentions are so prolonged or so bitter as those which are held in respect to their possession. But, of all the wells of the whole region, no two come so prominently forward as Beersheba, the favorite residence of Abraham and Jacob, and Beer-lahai-roi, the place around which Isaac loved to call together his flocks. Mr. Rowland, in his hasty tour through the south country, discovered a well some distance south of Wady Sheriah, the ancient Valley of Gerar, bearing the name Moilahi. This, from the resemblance in the names, he conjectured to be Hagar and Isaac's Lahai-roi. It is scarcely possible that this was the case. The country where Rowland made his early discoveries is too barren to have been attractive to a good husbandman like Isaac : he would have chosen the more fertile land south of Gaza, and in fact encroaching some distance upon what was the subsequent territory of the Philistines. The retem or juniper-bush grows there now just as it did in the olden time ; and it affords a scanty shelter from the sun's rays to the Arab of to-day, just as it did to Elijah, while he was on his pilgrimage to Horeb, and had advanced a day's journey south of Beersheba.

Here, then, in this half-fertile, half-desert tract, was the real home of the patriarchs. South of it was the wilderness the subsequent scene of their descendants' trials and pro-

tracted wanderings. North of it was the home of the Canaanites, the powerful and partly-civilized descendants of Ham. With the patriarchal families we see mingled rival lords of the soil, the Abimelechs, wandering princes also, men who lived in tents, and possessed vast flocks and herds. Abraham did not attempt to dispossess the strong tribes which he found lying between Dan and Beersheba: but after tarrying briefly at Shechem, Bethel, and Hebron, he went a few miles farther south, to the open country, where there were no walled cities; and here he and his sons and his sons' sons led their roving, pastoral life. We trace Hagar passing beyond that desert where she famished, making her abode for a season in Egypt, and securing a wife there for her son Ishmael; but none of the descendants (Gen. xxv.) work their way northward into the land of the Canaanites: they go south-east-ward into the hills and plains, and become the fathers of those wandering Arabs, who perpetuate, in the smallest details, the peculiarities of the time when Ishmael led his roving life. The other descendants of Abraham, his sons by Keturah (Gen. xxv.), went farther away; and we find them and their successors in the most fertile parts of Arabia Felix. Isaac remains at Beersheba and Mamre, and in the Vale of Gerar, a little westward, never leaving that region but once, and then when his father carried him for sacrifice to Moriah. I have already alluded to the rock-tomb which Abraham purchased of the Hittite tribe, and which was directly before those oaks of Mamre which for thirteen years sheltered Abraham's tents. The upland of Mamre is passed now by the traveler directly after leaving Hebron and going northward, itself bare and possessed of little that is striking



or interesting, saving a great oak, a vivid reminder of the terebinth under which Abraham refreshed himself. But the grave has had a more splendid destiny than the shaded spot where Abraham lived. There is no doubt whatever that the



MOSQUE AT HEBRON.

place where Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah, were buried, is now sacredly guarded within the mosque at Hebron. It is one of those places which are equally revered at the present time by Jew, Mahometan, and Christian ; and there has been not a year nor a day since the

time of Abraham when that rock-tomb has been exposed to desecration, or when a guard has not been set over it. From the time when Abraham purchased it, down all the centuries of the Old Covenant, it remained in the hands of the Jews. The Christians then gained possession of it ; then the Mahometans grasped it : but the patriarchs, and especially Abraham, were beloved in their eyes, and it suffered no detriment. The Christians held it again for the little season in which the Crusaders were victorious, and then relinquished it once more into the hands of the Moslems. These hold it to-day, as must be said to the shame of the Christian world. There is but one race which should possess and keep that hallowed tomb,—the Jews themselves. It ought, indeed, to be freely open to the Gentile world,—to those who, though not of the Abrahamic lineage, yet revere his memory, and accept the Christian fulfilling of his faith ; and yet it is owed to the Jews that it be taken from those who hold it now in their foul and unseemly clutch, and given to the descendants of the ancient patriarchs. Happily, the strong arm of the British government has wrested within our days what assuredly would not have been given ; and the Prince of Wales, accompanied by a small and chosen party of friends and scholars, has been permitted to go as far as some might perhaps consider it seemly under any circumstances to advance. It is true, they did not enter the cave itself. The darkened shrines which bear the names of the ancient patriarchs and their wives, and which are jealously guarded by the Moslem keepers, are directly over the tomb ; yet, in that part of the mosque which is called the shrine of Abraham, the royal party saw a hole about eight inches across,



which leads directly into the cave below. Every night, a lamp is lowered into the vault, but it is withdrawn by day. The original entrance is closed by masonry, but was doubtless on the southern face of the hill, and so situated that Abraham, as he sat under his oaks, could look fully into it. The student who may wish to trace the architectural history of the mosque will find it fully detailed in Ritter's work on the Holy Land, vol. iii. pp. 305 *et seq.* ; and no one can fail to be instructed by the graphic narrative which Dean Stanley, one of the Prince of Wales's party, has given of the royal visit in 1862. It is not to be forgotten, that the great earnestness to penetrate the cave of Machpelah is peculiar, it would seem, to the Christian nations of the present day. The pasha of Jerusalem, who yielded the right of entrance to the English party, expressed wonder at their curiosity, and said that "he had never thought of visiting the mosque for any other purpose than snuffing the sacred air." Yet it may be doubted whether, in case a strong curiosity should prompt a Mahometan to descend, he would dare to ; for Quaresmius tells us, "that, early as the seventh century, it was firmly believed, that, if any Mussulman entered the cavern, immediate death would be the consequence." I trust, however, that the growing weakness of the Turkish government will allow of even more perfect exploration. It is not too much to say, that, in a good measure of probability, the body of Jacob, embalmed as it was in Egypt, is in as perfect condition there to-day as are the mummies which are disinterred on the Nile ; and, it may be, the first layers of the masonry to be still seen at Hebron were laid by Joseph himself, on the occasion of his father's sumptuous funeral. That this is no



idle fancy is shown by the wealth and power of the man, whose father had been a Hebrew shepherd, but who had wrought out his fortune with such signal success in Egypt. Here Joseph had become habituated to magnificent sepulchers, as well as to sumptuous sepultures ; and after that costly pageantry of burial described so strikingly in the closing chapter of Genesis, it is hardly to be supposed that he would fail to designate, with some architectural memorial, the simple rock-grave which his great-grandfather purchased, and which for three generations had lain in its original rudeness.

Jacob's return to the land of his forefathers, that he might take a wife from his own family and not from strangers, brings Haran momentarily into view again ; and not Haran only, but one or two other places which have already become familiar to us in connection with Abraham's wanderings. He leaves Beersheba, the home of his childhood ; but he leaves it not to return to its comparative bareness, and the scanty resources which it had yielded to Abraham and Isaac. We find him living farther north, in the fertile vale of Hebron and on the fruitful plain of Shechem, but no more in the south country. His way led him from his childhood's home, along the great ridge which runs north and southward all the way from Dan to Beersheba. We get no glimpse of him till he reaches Bethel, the same place already noticed, the Luz of a former time, on a mountain directly east of which Abraham and Lot stood when they surveyed the whole country, and divided it between themselves. On one of the stones of that still wild and rocky spot, Jacob pillowed his head, and saw in his dream the ladder that reached to the stars. On he went, — no names of places given us, — and

came to the distant Mesopotamia, "the land of the people of the East," and at last greeted his kinsmen of Haran. Near the home of his grandfather, he wrought his fourteen years' service, and at last returned, no longer a solitary shepherd with crook and staff alone, but a man of substance. His flight with his wives and herds carried him, not, as before, past the foot of Hermon, and not far from Damascus, but south-westward, direct toward the mountains of Gilead, a distance of three hundred and fifty miles. This natural defense he reached on the seventh day. The high Mizpah, where he made his covenant with Laban, was long considered a sacred spot, and the cairn erected there testified to the historical interest of the place. It is not known with certainty at the present time where was that Mizpah, one of the many whose names are scattered through the Bible, and all of them designating a lofty natural watch-tower; but there is but little doubt that it lay on the eastern part of the Gilead range. Thence Jacob passed westward to the site of his next encampment, Mahanaim. This place, the scene of that "wrestling" which has given its own name to the Jabbok River, is familiarly known. It can be readily seen from any high point near the plain of Esdraelon. The eye, tracing the Jabbok from its confluence without the Jordan eastward, sees with distinctness, even at a considerable distance, the cleft which the river makes through the great rock wall which runs parallel with the Jordan, on the eastern bank, from its source to its mouth. On this ravine, but a half-day's march from the Jordan, was Mahanaim. From this point Jacob sent his messengers southward to the mountains of Seir, the possession

of his brother Esau, to greet and propitiate that powerful chieftain. Instead of bringing back a peaceful response, the martial brother, having already subdued the powerful Horites, who formerly inhabited Seir, headed his bands and rushed northward, as if with the object of checking Jacob's advance. I need not remind the reader of the fear of the younger brother, of the rich present sent to propitiate the elder, of the sudden revulsion in the mind of the impulsive Esau, and the peaceful interview of the chieftains. Esau and Jacob part on the borders of the Jabbok for the last time; the former returns with his retinue to his own mountains, the latter crosses the brook, then follows its course to the Jordan, and lodges at Succoth. Here he does not erect tents; he is passing into a higher stage of life. Succoth means "booths;" and the place, thousands of years subsequently, the scene of Lynch's encampment on the Jordan, testifies in its very etymology that there, on Israel's real entering the promised land as a nation, the day of tents and nomadic wanderings had passed away for ever.

From Succoth, near the confluence of the Jabbok and the Jordan, there are wadies, or gorges, running north-westward to the plain of Esdraelon and westward to the neighborhood of Shechem. The course which Jacob then took is one which has been frightfully familiar to the people of Palestine ever since. Down that cleft which he followed, over that same ford where he crossed the Jordan, and up the wadies, are even now, and have always been, the ravaging courses of those terrible Arabs who come from the east, and who are so much fiercer than any who are met in Palestine, or in the Sinai Peninsula. It is that open door eastward which now



makes the rich vale of Esdraelon little better than a waste of flowers, uncut grass, and rank weeds : no man dares till it ; for with the approach of harvest the Arabs would come up from across the Ghor, by Jacob's former path, and bring terror to man and destruction to every growing thing. And so it will be, so long as the present inefficient government holds sway, — a government so notoriously deficient in the power to protect its people that a land which once supported eight



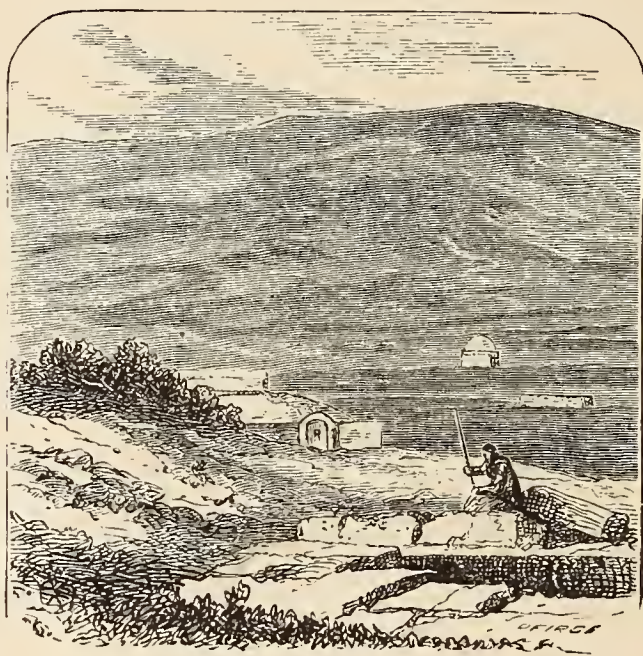
VICINITY OF NABLÛS.

1. Jacob's Well. 2. Joseph's Tomb. 3. Holy place of the Samaritans. 4. Nablûs.

millions of souls now meagerly gives sustenance to one-tenth of that number.

Shechem, that loveliest of all the vales of Palestine, wrought the same effect upon Jacob that it had done upon Abraham. As we find the grandfather tarrying at the plain of Moreh, and building an altar there ; so, under its changed name of Shechem, we see that it wins the grandson just as cordially. It was doubtless inhabited in Abraham's

day, but of its earlier tenants we do not hear ; enough that Abraham went southward before coming into collision with them. And there, by the side of that well which Jacob digged, and which, little changed, can be seen to-day, the shrewd, careful man could have lived without serious contention as well as Isaac lived in the valley of Gerar, far to the south. But this was not to be. The strivings of Isaac's herdsmen with those of Abimelech were easily pacified, in



JACOB'S WELL.

comparison with the feuds which the turbulent sons of Jacob stirred up with the Canaanites, who possessed the valley of Shechem. The cautious and peace-loving patriarch preferred to withdraw to a less favored spot, to the vale of Hebron, which his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac had loved. His journey southward took him past a site already sacred in his memory, the Luz, or Bethel, where that wonderful vision of angels ascending and descending came to him as he lay beneath the stars. He, as well as his grandfather

before him, appears to have always passed around that strong rock where the Jebusites lived, little conscious of its great destiny, and only once coming into momentary sight as the home of Melchisedek, whence he goes forth to greet Abraham after his victory over the kings of the East. But, south of the Jerusalem that was to be, Jacob came to a place which was to witness his greatest sorrow. On the highland a little north of Bethlehem, at a place called Ephrath, Rachel died and was buried. The place of her burial, kept in remembrance by successive structures, one of which, of comparatively modern construction, can be seen even now, is un-



RACHEL'S TOMB.

questionably authentically preserved. She could not be carried to Hebron, it would seem ; she must be buried by the wayside, where she fell. The next stage brings him to familiar ground, to Hebron and Mamre, and they become his home till his visit to Egypt. His sons do not appear to have repressed the wish to return and feed their flocks on the far richer and more extensive pasture-lands of the north ; and we find them once more on that fertile plain of Shechem, tending their flocks, while Joseph goes ten miles farther north-eastward to Dothan, just on the southern border of the



vale of Esdraelon. This place was brought to light by Robinson and Van de Velde, only fifteen years ago ; the traces of the great ancient road running southward toward Egypt being still discernible.



FLOWERS FROM THE VICINITY OF HARAN.

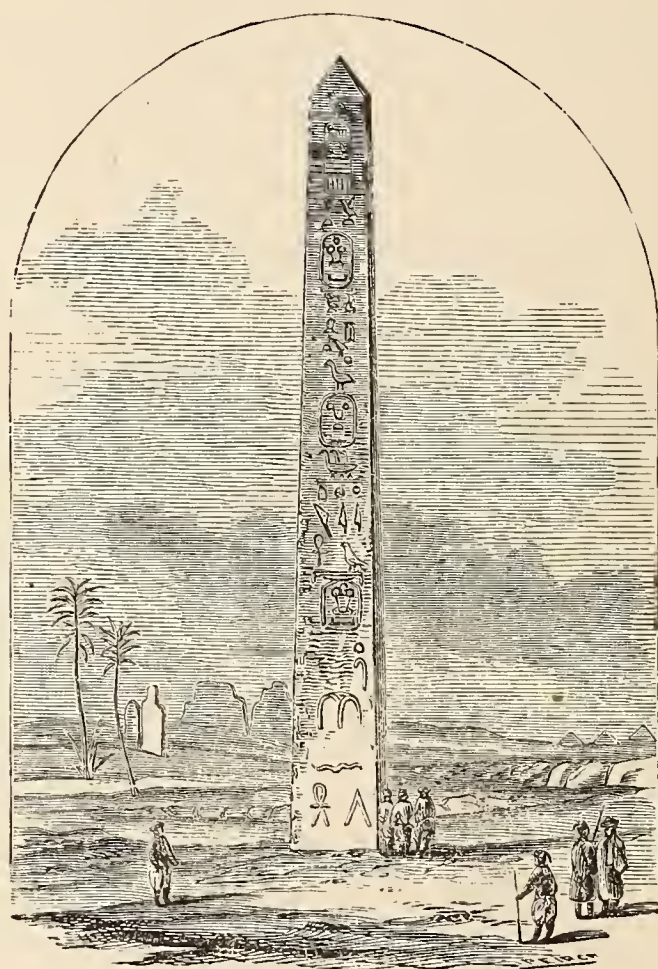
## IV.

### EGYPT, AND THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

THE scene of the Bible story now passes from Palestine to Egypt. That strip of land, but a few miles wide, and lining the banks of the Nile with emerald, was the mother of civilization. Zoan, in Egypt, lying east of the Tanitic mouth of the Nile, is referred to in the Bible as one of the most ancient cities in the world, and the rise of Egyptian civilization antedates all authentic history. The power of that nation culminated during the time of the Hebrew sojourn in that country ; Sesostris, the greatest and most formidable of the Egyptian monarchs, being almost unquestionably one of the Pharaohs who ruled while the Jews were in Goshen. It brings our subject out from the shadowy vagueness which might seem to rest upon it, to remember that in all great collections of Egyptian antiquities, such as that at Berlin, for example, the features of that mighty monarch are preserved, colossal in size, but perfectly well kept, and unquestionably authentic. Not that Rameses the Great, or Sesostris, as the Greeks called him, was the king of Egypt when Joseph went down into that country ; not that he was the Pharaoh who resisted Moses' demands : he lived between Joseph and Moses, and was one of those kings whose stern hand crushed the chosen people. The royal residences were at Memphis, a little south of Cairo, and near the pyramids (to be seen on



those plains even in Abraham's time), and at Zoan, east of the Tanitic mouth of the Nile. The sacred city, the seat of learning, the place where Joseph found his wife, and where Moses was educated, was at On, or Heliopolis, about ten miles north-east of Cairo; its remains are to be discerned even at the present day, though in a state of great decay.



REMAINS OF ON, OR HELIOPOLIS.\*

The tract which most interests us, however, is Goshen. The various hints of the Bible, when brought together and compared, enable us to determine the location of that fertile tract. It was unquestionably within the Lower Delta; it

\* The obelisk, seventy feet in height, now standing alone on the plain, was anciently one of many in the University-city of Egypt, and was doubtless standing in the time of Joseph and Moses.



was the country which lay between the capitals of Egypt and Palestine ; it was the tract on the extreme eastern frontier of the kingdom ; it was but three days' journey from the Red Sea ; it embraced some one or more of the Nile mouths. As we learn from Ps. lxxviii. 12 and 43, Zoan was within Goshen, and this city lay even west of the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile. The repeated references to the use of the river take away all doubt about a portion of the Israelites' dwelling upon its shores. The fish which they ate, the food which they raised, and which is found profusely where the inundations occur, as well as the express allusions to watering the ground with the foot, make it certain that the western border of Goshen was on the river. The distinct statement that it was but a three-days' march from one of the cities to the sea proves, on the other hand, that the district extended a considerable distance to the eastward, and embraced no inconsiderable share of that comparatively infertile country where the desert sands and the luxuriant Nile Valley struggle for supremacy. Its southern limit evidently came down well-nigh to On, or Heliopolis, about ten miles north, as already intimated, of the present city of Cairo ; for Joseph says, in the message which he sends to Jacob (Gen. xlv. 10), "Thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near me." When the patriarchal family and the dependants came down to Egypt, Joseph goes forth "to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen," showing that the district lay between the capital and southern Palestine. That tract, which even in its present neglect manifests that it is "the best in the land," was well adapted to a race of herdsmen ; and the abundant pasturage which the Hebrews' flocks would find would even surpass what had

been seen on the fruitful plains of Shechem. The Hebrews were useful as a kind of breakwater against the irruptions of



MAP OF GOSHEN.

wild Bedouin tribes ; and as they themselves were Bedouin in their characteristics, they would be skilled in all the arts of a half-civilized warfare. They were therefore of the very

highest service to their Egyptian masters, for the inroads of wild Asiatic tribes constituted one of the greatest scourges of Egyptian civilization. In the Greek translation of the Bible made in Egypt by the Seventy, while the memory of the old history was yet fresh, the word translated "treasure-cities," in the account of the works which the Hebrew bondmen wrought, is rendered "fortified cities," as if in allusion to the need of protection against inroads on the eastern frontier. Two of those cities are expressly named, — Rameses and Pithom. It may be that archæologists are mistaken in their alleged identification of the sites of those two cities, yet the physical character of the country makes it impossible to mistake their approximate situation. A little north of Cairo, the lines of long parallel limestone cliffs which accompany the river northward to this point recede from each other, and allow space for the Delta, — one of the lines of cliffs running away to the north-east, the other to the north-west. At one point, nearly east of the spot where the Pelusiac branch of the Nile diverges, there is a narrow break in this line of cliffs, and a valley may be traced eastward to the so-called Bitter Lakes of Suez. Excellent pasturage still extends up this valley, and here, on the extreme border of what was Egypt proper, and at the door of a natural avenue into the Nile Valley, the cities of Rameses and Pithom were built. Subsequent ages have recognized the value of that same natural communication, and the canal which has been recently opened is the third on the same line which has connected the Nile and the Red Sea. Here, and here alone, in this valley the rich basin of the Nile shades away by imperceptible gradations into the desert. Elsewhere the line



between fertility and sterility is one strictly drawn : here it is not. And thus it was in the time of the Exodus, when the Israelites exchanged the rank luxuriance of the Nile country for Succoth, the place of scant herbage, the place of "booths," and then for Etham, "on the edge of the wilderness." Here transition is manifestly depicted ; but this transition is only to be found in this valley. Those who have put Goshen further south, near Cairo, have not only to contend with the impossibility of passing in those days down to the Gulf of Suez, but also with the want of that gradual shading away of Goshen into the wilderness which the allusions to Succoth and Etham bring into view.

The exact locality of these places, as well as of those in the immediate vicinity of the Red Sea, is not known. Rameses almost unquestionably lay at the western opening of the valley that runs eastward to the Bitter Lakes. A collection of ruins is pointed out near to the village of Abbasah, which our countryman, Rev. Dr. Samson, one of the most careful observers who have investigated the subject, believes to be the remains of Rameses. No one wishing to investigate exhaustively the geography of Goshen and its treasure-cities of Rameses and Pithom can pass over Dr. Samson's contributions to "The Christian Review" for 1849 and 1850. From that point it is a three-days' journey, thirty-five miles, to the head of the Gulf. The first day's journey brought them to Succoth, a place whose name, signifying booths, sufficiently indicates its most striking physical character. Doubtless here they parted with civilization, and passed from houses to tents, by the transitional use, for a night, of structures which should partake of the nature of both, and be protected, it may be,

with a thin covering of leaves. It is easy even now to see where such an encampment would be naturally reared, and equally easy is it to mark the spot which is "on the edge of the wilderness." This line has no doubt shifted to a certain extent within four thousand years ; yet it may be approximately made out ; and where the grass ceased utterly, there was Etham.

The natural course of the Israelites was not directly toward the Red Sea ; it lay north of it, and was unquestionably known to their leader. Moses had been over the ground before, possibly often ; for the Egyptians had a mining colony in Arabia, not far from Mt. Sinai, and the way thither was a well-beaten track. It formed no part of his plan, however, to lead the people up to the Promised Land by the route which had been taken by Abraham when four centuries before he had come down to Egypt for bread ; which had been taken too by the Midianites when they brought Joseph down ; by the sons of Jacob and by Jacob himself when they came down ; and by Joseph when he carried his father's body up to Hebron in that imposing procession which has been described in the closing chapter of Genesis :\* this was a direct route running north-eastward, not far from the Mediterranean coast, and not passing within many miles of the Red Sea. The reason why that route was not taken is explicitly stated in the Scriptures. (Ex. xiii. 17, 18.) "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near ; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.

\* I do not accept the hypothesis that he passed around the Dead Sea and crossed the Jordan.

But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." Their direction was toward the south-east, instead of toward the north-east. The long *détour* which Moses proposed led him through territory with which he was perfectly familiar. Forty years of his life had been passed in that desert country, and even now a secluded dell close by the traditional Mt. Sinai bears the name of Moses' father-in-law. The real home of the Midianites was on the eastern side of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, it is true; but the nomadic habits of those days took Jethro and his tribe west of the Gulf of Akabah, and permitted them to look for pasturage even in the central granitic ridge where the law was afterward given to Moses. The whole country was doubtless as familiar to the Hebrew lawgiver as it is now to any Arab sheik; he knew every wady, every spring, every mountain, every place of pasturage. Mt. Serbal, the most imposing, though by no means the loftiest, mountain of the peninsula, had long been a hallowed place. It had been the resort of Phœnician and Philistine worshipers even before Moses' day, and was doubtless the goal of that pretended pilgrimage which Moses asked permission of Pharaoh to make (Ex. viii. 27): "We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God."

In view of the fact that Moses proposed to enter Palestine by a long *détour*, in order that the training of the desert might discipline them, and transform them from an enervated, effeminate, leprous race into hardy and energetic soldiers, equal to the great task of conquest before them, he struck out in the general direction of the Gulf of Suez. Doubtless, as already remarked, a regular road ran past the



head of the gulf to the Egyptian mining colony of Serabit el Khadem, north-west of Mt. Serbal, and it was a simple matter to follow it and double the northern extremity of the gulf. It is true, the Red Sea extended some miles farther north than it does now ; yet near its head were cities, and a beaten road ran eastward into the Sinai Peninsula. Much difficulty is found by certain biblical students in accepting the story of the sea's opening and affording deliverance to the Israelites, and closing in upon the pursuing Egyptians ; but there is an antecedent difficulty which rises even before we reach this. There are three places mentioned (Ex. xiv.) as in proximity with the sea, — Migdol, Pi-hahiroth, and Baal-zephon. The location of the second of these is not determined ; probably it is indeterminable. Migdol, the town or tower which the Greeks subsequently called Magdalon, was at some distance north of the gulf. Baal-zephon appears to have been the ridge even then consecrated to the worship of Baal, which is now to be recognized in the bold Jebel Attakah, running south-eastwardly down to the shore, and forming in its eastern extremity a striking bluff. Between this ridge and the sea was a triangular piece of land, on some part of which was Pi-hahiroth. For some reason, entirely unexplainable on any theory but that which recognizes a miraculous intervention in parting the waters of the sea, Moses did not lead the host of the Israelites along the well-beaten road which doubled the head of the gulf, but drew them into that triangle which was bordered on the right by Baal-zephon, or Jebel Attakah, on the left by the sea, and in the rear by the great Egyptian army. It was therefore appropriate for Pharaoh to say, "They are entangled in the land ; the wilderness hath shut them in."

The place where the crossing was effected was limited to the few miles between the point where the bold bluff of Jebel Attakah runs down to the sea, and the ancient head of the gulf, a few miles north of the present city of Suez. Everywhere there the water is shallow, and landings are at the present day only effected by means of boats, and with much difficulty. It is a safe conjecture, that the passage was made very near the site of Suez. Doubtless, wind and tide were agents in the piling-up of the waters, and their subsequent return; the Scripture itself states, that the "Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night." Dr. Bonar, in his excellent book called "The Desert of Sinai," accuses the learned and pious Robinson of trying to weaken the force of the miracle by ascribing it to wind and tide; but not so do I read the work of our countryman: on the contrary, he stands strongly on the ground that a miracle was wrought, but simply claims that in working this great wonder God brought the winds and the waves into subjection to his will, and made them the ministers in executing his mighty purpose.



## V.

### THE SINAI PENINSULA.

WE have now taken the Hebrews back into Asia, their true home. Our next step will be to follow them in their long and toilful pilgrimage. It is true that they reached the borders of the promised land in about a year and a half after going out from Egypt, of which time a year was spent in the shadow of Mt. Sinai. The other thirty-eight years of their wanderings were passed in a limited region on the eastern and north-eastern border of the peninsula, and in a country of almost no resources, and scarcely superior to the deserts of Shur or Sinai.

Before attempting to follow the journey of the Israelites through the "wilderness," let me briefly sketch the physical character of the whole tract known as the Peninsula of Sinai. Between the two arms of the Red Sea known as the Gulfs of Akabah and Suez, there is a triangular piece of land, whose base line is about one hundred and thirty miles in length, and runs from the city of Suez to the fortress of Akabah. The lower portion of this triangle is a mass of granitic mountains, broken up into the most irregular and fantastic forms, and yet having a manifest center, the striking group of peaks of which Mt. Sinai is one. From this central knot of mountains there are various wadies, or waterless river-courses, running away to the sea, and forming natural means of com-



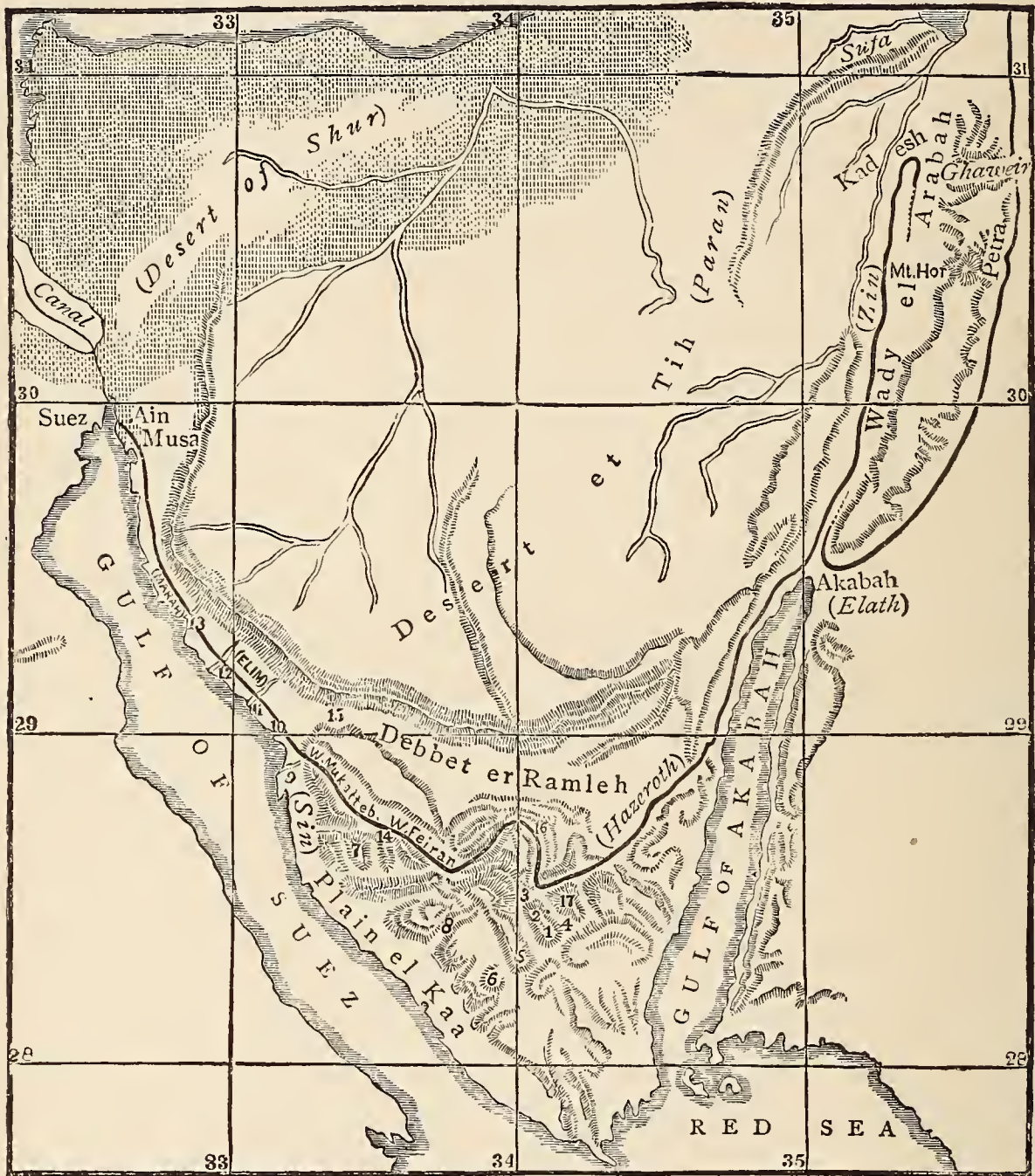
munication between the various parts of this wild and formidable mass of rock. Perhaps nowhere else in the world is the face of nature more ruggedly sublime than here. The mountains met there are of no ordinary height; the loftiest one, Om Shaumer, being nine thousand three hundred feet in altitude, and St. Catherine being eight thousand seven hundred. Standing on the summit of either one of these, the Gulf of Akabah is plainly seen on the east, and that of Suez on the west, neither of them but a few miles away. The country itself seems as if some gigantic convulsion once passed over it, heaving up huge waves of molten granite, and then cooling them at once. They have retained the ancient sharpness; and such is the dryness of the air, and the want of great and wearing rains, added to the natural hardness of the rock, that time has exerted no corrosive influence, and the aspect of the country can scarcely be changed from what it was when the Israelites passed through. North of this triangle, which occupies a good portion of the peninsula proper, there is an elevated plateau of limestone, the southern border of which is an almost precipitous wall of rock, four thousand feet in height. This does not run due east and west; it forms a rude rim around the southern, south-western, and south-eastern sides of the plateau. The surface of this elevated plateau is undulating, and, in its north-east portion, rises into a second or superimposed plateau, which gradually settles away northward to meet the thin and scanty pasture lands of the "south country," the ancient patriarchal home. East of this great plateau runs northward and southward the desolate and arid trough of the Arabah, connecting the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akabah, and forming a con-

tinuation of that great cleft, or depressed chasm, which connects the Red Sea with Lake Tiberias. It was supposed, until a very recent date, that the lower portion of the Ghor, or Jordan gorge, was so far depressed below the level of the ocean, that, if it were possible to run a canal across the plain of Esdraelon, and onward, between Gilboa and Tabor, till it should reach the Jordan, the entrance of the Mediterranean would at once form a noble ship-canal between Lake Tiberias and the Red Sea ; and it is not many years since Capt. Allen, of the English Navy, wrote a book called "The Dead Sea a New Route to India," in which he discussed this theory *in extenso*. Later investigations have shown, however, that the land east of the plain of Esdraelon is so elevated that a canal would be impracticable at that point ; and, moreover, that could the Jordan be flooded in this way, could that long defile between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea be converted into a deep lake, and the latter made many feet deeper than it is, the Arabah, the trough running from the Dead Sea southward to the Gulf of Akabah, instead of being all the way depressed to the extent that it has been supposed, rises at its highest portion to an altitude (eight hundred feet) altogether precluding the possibility of its being submerged. Measurements have been made repeatedly with a view to ascertain this fact ; and at last it has been put beyond the possibility of error.

The physical character of the Sinai Peninsula is little changed, as remarked before, from what it was at the time of the Exodus. It is a land without a history ; the only point where it links itself in with the changing destinies of the world is at the time when the Israelites sojourned within it.



It always had a scanty, wandering population ; and the few thousands of Arabs who inhabit the peninsula to-day are



THE SINAI PENINSULA.

1. Jebel Musa. 2. Ras Sasafeh. 3. Plain er Rahah. 4. Wady Sebaiyeh. 5. Jebel Catherine. 6. Om Shaumer. 7. Mt. Serbal. 8. W. Hebran. 9. W. Shellal. 10. El Murkah. 11. W. Tayibeh. 12. W. Ghurundel. 13. Ain Howarsh. 14. Pharan (Rephidim). 15. Serabit el Khadem. 16. W. Sheikh. 17. Ed Deir.

about as numerous, probably, and live in precisely the same manner, as the Amalekites of old, who had possession of the



pasture land of the country. It is a region which always has been without houses ; the little ecclesiastical city of Pharan, now in ruins, not being a real exception, so foreign was it to the whole character of the land. It has no soil capable of continuous and profitable cultivation ; the long and fertile valley known as the Wady Feiran, at the foot of Mt. Serbal, not having breadth and scope enough to repay for colonizing it alone. A great part of the country is so sterile as to fill the mind of travelers with dismay ; there is no grass, no thrifty trees, except in Wady Feiran and at the Convent of Mt. Sinai, — nothing but acacia-bushes, and furzy, thin, aromatic shrubs. After the rains of winter, it is true, a quick vegetation springs up ; but the sun and the subsequent drought cause it to wither and utterly vanish. There are comparatively few springs in the country ; those which emerge from the limestone tract are almost intolerably bad, while those issuing from the southern granitic tract are sweet and refreshing. The natural channels of communication across the country are in one sense numerous : in another they are not so ; for, although the number of unimportant wadies is large, yet the really effective lines of intercourse are so few and so striking that there is no difficulty whatever in following them. Despite, therefore, the want of historical monuments, and the want of a nation there which perpetuates the history of the past, the physical character of the country is such that the simple narrative of the Bible allows us to follow, with tolerable closeness, and with a sense of certitude, the line of the Israelites' march. From the head of the Gulf of Suez there is a roughened plain, about ten miles in width, running southward for several miles, having the sea on the west, and the

precipitous edge of the great Tih plateau on the east. Moses and the Israelites must have followed this plain ; there is no alternative. South of this plain the system of great wadies is so simple that we have little if any difficulty in tracing them to Sinai. From Sinai, north-eastward, the task of following them is much more difficult, it is true ; but there are certain landmarks there which make it tolerably easy to determine the course of the wanderers. I need not say that the word wilderness, used almost invariably in the Bible to signify the Sinai Peninsula, does not correspond at all with our use of the same term. To many of us it suggests the idea of dense woodland ; it should imply the very reverse,—a tract utterly destitute of vegetation, and wholly desert, sterile, repulsive. Nor should it convey the impression of a sandy waste. With the exception of the limited tract known as Ramleh, south of the Tih plateau, there is no sandy district in the whole peninsula. The country is stony and pebbly, but not sandy.

Arabia Petræa, as this country is sometimes called, is a land which has always been interesting to pilgrims. As early as the time of Elijah, to go to Horeb was a journey of devotion ; and the old prophet is seen going down thither to commune with God in the place which had been consecrated centuries before his day. Very early in the history of the Christian church, the Sinaitic region became a sacred resort ; and Arabian geographers and Christian travelers have explored it in all ages. The first volume of Ritter's " Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula " is devoted, in a large measure, to the tracing of the routes of those who have carefully explored the land ; and no man in our time has had

the patience to sift and compare their accounts with the care and fidelity and ability of the great German geographer. He has reviewed all the Roman itineraries, examined the Pentinger Tables, read all the Arabian and Greek geographers, and investigated the whole Christian literature of the subject. In my translation of his important work on the peninsula I have retained all that could illustrate the Bible ; and yet no one can adequately measure the enormous erudition of Carl Ritter who does not look into the original and see what he has called out to illustrate the geography of Arabia Petræa as it is connected with extra-biblical literature.

What Ritter has done for this department, our countryman, Dr. Robinson, only second to Ritter in his command of the literature of Sinai and Palestine, has done for original research on the spot. Ritter was never in the Holy Land ; Robinson was the most acute and at the same time the most learned investigator who has ever gone thither. It is not too much to say that Robinson's Biblical Researches are worth all the records of travel in the Holy Land from the time of the Saviour down to the time when he published his work. And this I say in full recognition of the value of Seetzen's, Irby and Mangles', Burckhardt's, Niebuhr's, Russegger's, and Ruppell's thorough, accurate, and hard-gained results, and in recognition, too, of a certain degree of merit to be ascribed to such writers as Felix Fabri, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Pietro della Valle, Buckingham, Pococke, and Monro. Yet all candid students of biblical geography know that when Robinson came upon the field, he observed so closely, with such ample preparation, and such acumen, that the publication of his work produced a revolution in the department. He has been



worthily followed; but such works as Stanley's, Schubert's, Tristram's, Wilson's, Porter's, Laborde's even, and Thomson's, would hardly have been possible had Robinson not gone before. Indeed, he did his work so thoroughly that others have had but little to do except to glean in the field which he harvested. With the exception of a few narrow men who adhere closely to the monkish traditions respecting holy places, European scholars place just as high value on Robinson as we Americans can do: indeed, much more, for he is really only appreciated fully in Europe. I think I can not be wrong in saying, that, in the judgment of English and German scholars, Edward Robinson is the greatest name that has sprung up among us; and the preface of almost every new work on Biblical Antiquities echoes the words of Ritter and Stanley respecting the amazing extent and accuracy of Robinson's investigations.

Having briefly sketched the physical character of the Sinaitic peninsula, and alluded to the literature of the subject, let me enter into some detail respecting the journey of the Israelites through the land. The first part of the way is unmistakable; it ran along that undulating plain which has already been referred to as lying between the lofty limestone wall on the east and the sea on the west. Northward and southward, as far as the eye can reach, the Israelites could see confronting them that giant barricade, rising to the altitude of about four thousand feet. To ascend it would have been impossible for such a number of people, although the regular Mecca caravans now climb to the top by a natural pass, and strike directly eastward across the high plateau, descending again on the eastern margin, not far from the

head of the Gulf of Akabah. The Israelites, however, did not attempt this, but followed the plain along the shore. It is a cheerless and most inhospitable country. There are some tolerable springs near the place where they crossed the sea, still known as the springs of Moses, shaded by palms, and a favorite resort to-day for the people of Suez, who, in the absence of better attractions, elevate that scanty oasis into the rank of their fashionable watering-place.

But from that point for many miles southward, for a three-days' journey of the slowly-moving Israelite host, there are no supplies of water, and not a plant or a shrub which could in the slightest degree satisfy the hunger of man or beast. The Israelites, who had so recently left the luxurious Valley of the Nile, were sorely tried even at the very start ; indeed, there are few spots in the whole peninsula which would have more disheartened them than this barren plain along the sea. The site of the fountains of Marah, the bitter waters which they could not drink, is now easily traced ; indeed, the name still clings to the spot : and not only do travelers speak of the Ain Howarah, but of the Ain Amarah, almost side by side, whose waters are only used from sheer necessity. All the springs which flow from that limestone soil are bad, but none are intolerable excepting those which are first encountered after leaving Ain Musa, opposite Suez. And these are the ones which correspond with the Marah fountains of Scripture. Still farther on, about one day's journey southward, are the well-shaded and numerous springs of Wadies Ghurundel, Useit and Tayibeh, whose palm-trees are still the delight of all travelers. These were threescore and ten in number when the Israelites passed that way ; they are

variously counted by the explorers of our own day, but are not widely different from the old number. The taste of the water is not markedly different from that found at the old springs of Marah; yet nearly all agree that the preference is to be given to that of Elim. The Scripture does not assert nor even imply that that of Elim was pleasant; it is an unwarranted inference — which has been drawn from the obviously attractive character of the place where they made their first long encampment — that the water of Elim was sweeter than that of Marah. That it is somewhat more agreeable is asserted by travelers; yet the difference is not marked: the same physical cause which controls the one controls the other also. In the midst of the attractions of Elim the Israelites tarried a month and a half. The place of their chief encampment was doubtless in the broad, open, fair wady known still as the “goodly,” or Wady Tayibeh. It runs downward to the sea, and has a fine open view of the opposite coast-land of Egypt, and the intensely blue waters of the Gulf of Suez, a good way northward and southward. It has been the custom of some writers to assume that the single Wady of Ghurundel is the Elim of Scripture; but the requisitions of so vast a host as that of the Israelites during a sojourn of more than a month make it almost necessary to infer that they distributed themselves over all the fertile tracts in the immediate neighborhood.

From Elim there was a tedious and difficult passage to the Wilderness of Sin. They could either have passed by narrow and obstructed defiles, or round about, as some travelers do, by a narrow and dangerous path running between the rocks and the sea. Here is the natural boundary between



the Desert of Shur and the Desert of Sin. The latter is a desolate plain, about twelve miles in length, and known to-day as El Murkah. Little water is found upon it, and what there is, is bitter. It is a place which one can see at a glance would sorely try the Israelites, and compel them to cry out, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full ; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." It is noticeable that it was in this desert, where the tamarisk-tree is not found, where, in fact, there is no vegetation, that the supply of manna first appeared.

From the plain of El Murkah, the Wilderness of Sin, there are three ways which might have been taken. One of these passes near the base of the great rock-wall of the Tih plateau, runs near the ancient Egyptian mining colony of Serabit el Khadem, — whose ruins are still distinctly visible, and which was probably a busy scene at the time of the Exodus, — soon after traverses the sandy waste of Debbet ér Ramleh, and then, by a difficult and narrow line of wadies, or rock valleys, runs down to the open plain in front of the traditional Mt. Sinai. This led the Israelites toward the left. Another way ran along the borders of the sea to the plain El Kaa, which lies between the whole granitic mountain-mass at the south of the peninsula, and the sea ; and from this plain, by way of the important Wady Hebran, up to Mt. Sinai. This would cause them to bear to the right, and then to take a sharp turn to the left. There still is a middle course. They may have crossed the Desert of Sin, entered the romantic valley known as Shellal, and passed by it into the long and

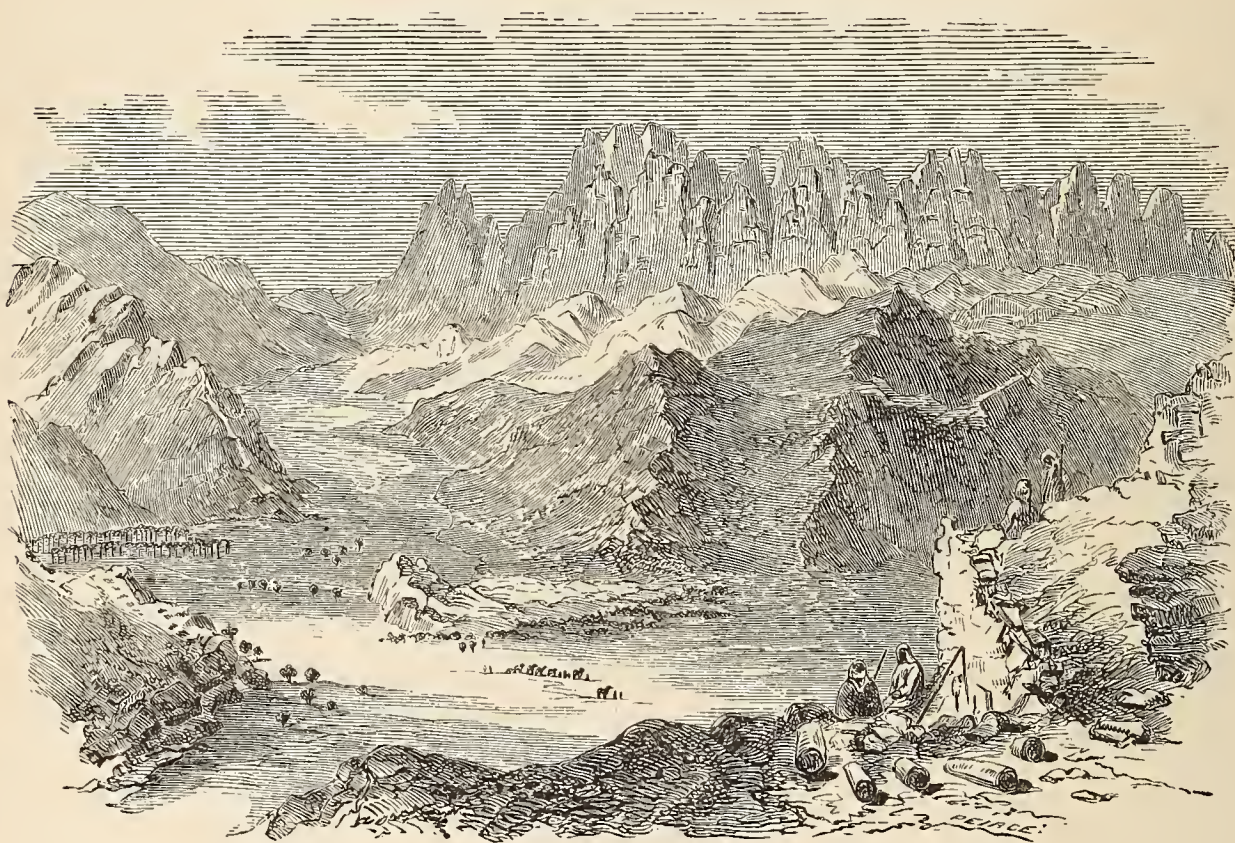
curious ravine known as Wady Mukatteb, or Valley of the Inscriptions; thence into the fair, fertile, and well-watered Wady Feiran, and directly to the base of Mt. Sinai. There is little or no doubt that the latter was the one chosen; it has every advantage in its favor, — it is the most direct, the best supplied with shade and water, and the one which is most in harmony with the Scripture narrative. The first of the three ways is rocky, scantily supplied with springs, and longer than the last; the second is much longer and much harder; the last is the one which is now assumed by all later observers as the route of the Israelites.

Two places are then mentioned as the scenes of temporary encampment, — Dophkah and Alush: no traces of them remain, but they were unquestionably on or near the plain El Murkah. But passing that, we come to more explicit allusions, and to scenes of even greater interest. In the well-watered and palm-shaded Wady Feiran, directly at the base of the imposing five-peaked Serbal, — a sacred mountain for long ages even when the Israelites passed by its foot, — there was the encampment of a part of the numerous and widely-scattered Amalekites. They were just such a race, doubtless, as the strongest and fiercest of the Arab tribes of the present day. They knew of the approach of the Israelites, and predicted with certainty, that, if a stand were not made, the delightful paradise which they inhabited would be wrested from them, and its clear brook and lofty palms become the possession of this host of strangers. This was the reason of the stand which they made; this the cause of that noted battle. The Israelites advanced along that wonderful Valley of Inscriptions, Wady Mukatteb, whose walls are written over

with those mysterious and undeciphered hieroglyphics, provoking the curiosity of travelers more than any other object in the whole peninsula, and traced more or less numerous on every important mountain and rock-wall in the land, with the single exception of Mt. Sinai. From Wady Mukatteb they passed into Wady Feiran ; the place where they are connected being, it would seem, the site of Rephidim. At the very foot of Serbal, and rising distinctly in view of those who stand in the valley known as Feiran, is a low but well-marked hill, on which Moses, Aaron, and Hur appear to have stood during the battle. The victory of the Israelites put them in possession of the most paradisiacal spot in the whole peninsula. For more than a month and a half they remained in that fertile vale. The Egyptian colony at Serabit el Khadem was not far from them ; but not a hint is given in the Bible to indicate whether the two races came at all into contact. Yet, visitors came from Midian, east of the Gulf of Akabah, with an errand of great import to the Israelites. It is a curious fact that the polity which Jethro imparted to Moses, his son-in-law, is singularly like that which prevails among the Bedouins of the present time. The taking away of that single responsibility which was slowly crushing the strength of the great lawgiver by overtaxing his power, was followed by that delegation of trust to rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, which is a marked feature of Arab polity ; and every line in the description of the interview of Moses and Jethro is faithful to the experience of all close observers of the Bedouin character. It has been supposed by many, and by some too whose opinions are entitled to the most respectful consideration, that Mt. Serbal, the most striking



by far in the whole peninsula, is the Sinai of the Bible. There is little or no doubt that that was a holy mountain at the time of the Exodus, and that it was the place whither not only Phœnicians and Philistines resorted, but Egyptians as well, for the purpose of sacrifice. It has been a hallowed spot in modern time ; the remains of altars may be seen on the summit, and the ecclesiastical city of Pharan, the walls of



RUINS OF PHARAN, AND MT. SERBAL.

which are yet standing, was at its base. It is the place to which, in all probability, as has already been remarked, Moses wished to go to sacrifice, a three-days' journey in the wilderness. Some have thought that Horeb is Serbal, and Sinai the well-known sacred mountain ten miles farther west ; others, with more reason, as it seems to me, make Horeb a generic word comprising that whole region embracing both

Sinai and Serbal. Still, after giving due weight to the arguments of Lepsius, that Serbal, the sacred mountain of that region in the most ancient time, was the scene of the law-giving, I must admit that the hints given in the Bible do not apply so well to it as to the traditional mountain of Sinai. I know that Serbal is the most imposing mountain; but it is by no means the loftiest, it being but six thousand three hundred feet high, while the traditional Sinai is more than eight thousand. Besides, the delightful Wady Feiran at its base can not be confounded with the Wilderness of Sinai. The Bible says (Ex. xix. 1), after its account of the battle with the Amalekites and the interview with Jethro, manifestly in Wady Feiran, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount."





## VI.

### MOUNT SINAI, AND THE YEARS OF WANDERING.

FROM the foot of Serbal, and the luxuriant verdure of Wady Feiran, there runs a broad, curving valley, the largest and most important in the whole peninsula, bearing the name of Wady Sheikh. It is a continually-ascending way, and leads to a plain from which rises the group of mountains, Ed Deir, St. Catherine, Sinai, and Om Shaumer. From Serbal to Sinai there is a more direct but frightfully precipitous and rocky path, the Nubh Hawy, or Pass of the Winds, whose difficulties travelers agree in regarding as the most formidable in the peninsula. The broader and longer one of these was doubtless taken by the main body of the Israelites; and there is found in it, even now, no scanty amount of pasturage for flocks. Emerging from the broad mouth of Wady Sheikh, the traveler stands on the Desert of Sinai. A plain is seen, vast in size when one thinks how rare it is to meet any continuous tract in that broken and rocky country, for it embraces no less than a square mile. At one extremity there towers the lofty, craggy pile known as Ras Sasafeh, the northern abutment of Sinai. Its grandeur and precipitousness, taken in connection with the great plain at its base, caused Robinson to suspect in a moment that here was the scene of the law-giving. The highest peak of Sinai can not be seen from this plain; one must pass round the



mountain to the south side to see it ; but the northern side is so bold and steep that it makes an even more striking impression on the mind than the more shelving southern ascent. The face of Ras Sasafeh rises so that one can well see that the command was an intelligible one, that the mount be not touched ; towering, as it does, like a wall of rock. On that



MT. SINAI, FROM THE PLAIN ER RAHAH.

plain, hundreds of thousands of people could stand, and look up to the majestic, overhanging cliff. At the southern base of Sinai is another tolerably large tract of ground, known as the Plain of Sebaiyeh ; but it is far more broken and uneven than the great camping-ground on the north. Since the time of Robinson, most travelers have coincided with his view, that the latter was the place where the people assembled when the

law was given, though there are some who insist that they were on the more uneven ground south of the mountain, since there is the view of the true crest of Sinai. The mountain is long, rather than round, and its physical character is this: On the east there is a defile running northward and southward, separating Sinai from the lofty mountain known as Ed Deir. On the western side there is another similar ravine, separating Sinai from the still loftier peak of St. Catherine. In the former of these defiles, a mile from the great plain at the north base of the mountain, is the Greek convent, built in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, and the only hostelry for travelers in the whole peninsula. It has been so often described that I need only allude to it, for it bears no special relation to my subject. It has, within a very few years, been brought into new prominence as the scene of Prof. Tischendorf's discovery of a very ancient manuscript of the New Testament; and I shall not soon forget the rare pleasure I enjoyed, a few months since, in hearing from his own lips the story of that most interesting discovery, — the unfolding of hint after hint, the intense anxiety, and the hours of joy when the precious document came to light. In the other ravine, that along the western base of the mountain, is a deserted convent, that of El Arbain, or the Forty. The ascent is made from the convent, the way leading up continuous flights of rude stairs, cut along in the solid granite. The top of the mountain is long and tolerably flat, being mostly a small rock-plateau, running northward to a sharp edge, down which you can look, as from the eaves of a house, directly upon the great plain. The southern portion of the mountain rises cone-like into the air, and looks down upon the narrower and more broken Plain



of Sebaiyeh at the southern base of Sinai. On this high peak Moses would seem to have dwelt during those long forty days and forty nights in which he was communing with his God ; while Joshua appears not to have gone above the rock-plateau, and there to have awaited the return of Moses from the



CONVENT OF ST. CATHERINE.

loftier hight. The place has for centuries been a sacred one, and the broken remnants of churches and chapels, and a mosque, even, testify to the ancient regard of Mohammedans as well as Christians for this sacred spot.

I am inclined to think that the true view of the place of



the encampment must be gained by partial concession both of those who hold to the northern and those who hold to the southern plain. They are connected, not only by the narrow ravine east of Sinai, which beyond the convent narrows into a mere foot-path, but by a very broad line of valley which passes east of the mountain east of Sinai. In this valley, as well as in the two plains, there was an excellent opportunity for encampment ; and I can not forbear thinking that the great host of the Israelites filled both the plains and this circuitous Wady Sebaiyeh, as well as that portion of Wady Sheikh which connects the great plain Er Rahah with Wady Sebaiyeh. The play of lightnings was doubtless visible all over the mountain ; the elders and the chief priests were probably in the plain south of the mountain, and an immense multitude doubtless stood on the northern plain, and looked up to the top of the massive wall which is called Ras Sasafeh.

Most travelers have inferred, from the fact that the ascent is on the eastern side, that there was the path by which Moses went up ; but my friend, Rev. F. W. Holland of London, who has recently passed several weeks in that neighborhood, assures me the most accessible way is one leading from the northern extremity of the western defile, and that there is little doubt that Moses went up and down that way. If that is the case, the old tradition which makes the casting of the golden calf at that point would seem to rest upon a certain basis of truth ; although, as a general rule, these traditions — such for instance as that the convent occupies the place where Moses discovered the burning bush, and that the rock can still be seen at the foot of Sinai which was smitten by Moses, and from which water gushed — are idle fables,

invented by the Greek monks for the easy credulity of the Arabs. Still, there are one or two interesting circumstances connected even with these traditions : one is, that the mountain itself bears the name, not of Sinai, but of Jebel Musa, the Mount of Moses, while the ravine east of it is called, even to-day, by the Arab name of Moses' father-in-law.

Around this mountain lay the tract known as the Wilderness of Sinai. It is one thousand feet higher than the level of Wady Feiran ; the air is dry, clear, and bracing. I need not say that this is one of the healthiest districts in the world ; the winds which sweep across these rocks are laden with no impurities, and bring only vigor. There are a few springs of water, and these are sweet and refreshing, for they issue from granite, not from limestone. There are small bits of land moist enough to reward tillage ; and all travelers are enthusiastic about the trees and grass and herbs grown in the garden of the Greek convent. In the western ravine there are the traces of old gardens not quite given up to utter neglect ; the monks go thither every year and take a little care of them, gathering figs and dates and almonds, and a few other tropical productions, to lay in store, or to send to Cairo. On the mountains there grow a few aromatic shrubs, and in the wadies there are scanty furze-bushes, giving a meager support to the camels and the goats of the Arabs, and once sustaining the herds of the Israelites. The Wilderness of Sinai comprised a large part of Wady Sheikh, the plain Er Rahah, the plain of Sebaiyeh, and Wady Sebaiyeh. It was the Israelites' home for a year ; and here not alone was the Decalogue given, but the whole ceremonial law was perfected, and propounded to the people. As the Bible expressly says

that the Decalogue was given during a thunder-storm, while the people were filled with fear, it may be remarked incidentally, that one, at least, of the travelers who have given us the record of their wanderings has described a thunder-storm at Sinai. The play of lightning and the echoes of the thunder he asserts to have been extraordinarily grand and impressive. The ordinary silence of the desert is so appalling that when it is broken in this way the roll of thunder is doubly loud, and the mountains themselves seem to quake. A person sitting on the summit of Ras Sasafeh, and speaking in ordinary tones, can be understood at the base, for there is not the sound of a bird or an insect or a brook to mingle with his voice. The desert is inhabited by absolute, unbroken silence. It is unnecessary to say that Moses, learned as he was in the arts of the Egyptians, was master of no magic which would enable him to create a mimic thunder-storm on Sinai; and it is a paltry way of dealing with the text to degrade that great convulsion of the elements in which the law was given, into the legerdemain of a showman. Whatever more there was, there was a storm of thunder and lightning, not inferred from hints in the Bible, but directly and explicitly asserted.

Among the chapels on Sinai there is one bearing the name of Elijah; and near it is a small aperture in the rock, which is asserted to have served the prophet as a lodging-place. In the absence of a spot more fit, this is thought, even by the careful Ritter, to be authentic. The pilgrimage of Elijah to Horeb is the only instance recorded in the Bible of any one of the Israelites going down from Palestine to view the scene where the law was given. How different from the pilgrim



spirit of the present and the past few centuries ! It was an easy thing for the Jews to go to Horeb, but its ancient fame appears to have inspired no desire to see it. It throws new light, not more on the spirituality of Elijah than upon the worldliness of the nation in whose mind he tried to keep divine truth a living thing. And here was the place, so far as the evidence in our possession enables us to go, where Elijah was, after receiving the command to "go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord ; but the Lord was not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake : and after the earthquake a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a still, small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave ; and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah ?"

"The view from the summit can not compare," says Ritter, "even under the clearest sky, with that from St. Catherine, and hence travelers who have interested themselves in making a topographical survey of the whole peninsula have made little account of it. But the very fact that Sinai is so overtopped by loftier peaks gives the view from its summit its own peculiar charms. Shut in, as the observer is, he can better study the strange wildness and sublimity of this little cluster of naked mountains, and get a better conception of the strange elemental forces which produce so haggard a scene, than if upon a loftier summit and with a wider view. Sir Francis Henniker has very truly and finely said that it seemed

to him, as he surveyed the wild picture before him, as if it had once been an ocean of boiling lava, cooled and fixed in its present form by a single mandate of the Most High.

“ Yet, though the view from Sinai toward the east, south, and west is comparatively limited, in consequence of the greater height of the outlying peaks, the view is by no means inconsiderable, nor to be dismissed with a hasty passing word. Both the arms of the Red Sea can be seen, although only in glimpses. ‘Close before me,’ says Wellsted, ‘rose St. Catherine, with its bare, wedge-shaped peak, wearing a snow-cap cone yet upon its head. For many years, in the course of repeated voyages made in all the waters adjacent to this region, I had been accustomed to look at all these mountain systems from every point of view; but the loftiness of the Sinai group gave it at once a special character. Rising in sharp, isolated wedges, enormous masses of rock have detached themselves from time to time, and have fallen, giving rise to deep clefts, gorges, and ravines, which break through the whole district, and give it the wildest aspect. The highest summits are covered with snow in winter, which, melting in spring, fills the channels of countless brooks, and sweeps with mad and devastating violence through all the mountain-passes, carrying away whatever little soil may have accumulated. The lofty wedge-shape brings the peaks of the Sinai group in sharp contrast with those of the other long, low ridges of the peninsula. No resting-places for man, no villages, no castles, give animation to the scene, as in European mountain regions; no lake, no clear river, no waterfall, no forest, breaks the monotony of solitude. Everywhere there is seen only the wide, empty wilderness, — gray, dark-brown,

black,—in the extreme distance the bright sea of sand. There is nothing to give interest to the scene except the mighty recollection of the past: this throws over it all a dark and deep and mysterious charm.’”

In the valleys and on the plains which encompass Sinai the Israelites passed nearly a year. At the end of that time, the law being perfected, the people, being hardened by their tent life and open-air duties, were supposed to be ready to move on to the promised land without delay. Up to this point we have followed them without great difficulty: after this point their course is much more uncertain, partly in consequence of the obscurity of the language of Scripture, and partly from the want of a thorough examination of the whole country. It is true, every route has been traversed, but no traveler has explored all, compared them with themselves and with the biblical account, and given us the result of his investigations. Still, there is little need of this. The general character of the country is much the same, whichever way the Israelites chose in their journey northward. It was a great and terrible wilderness, relieved with few springs and scanty vegetation, and filled with narrow passes and desolate plains. It is almost a profitless use of time to endeavor to decipher the geography of the thirty-third chapter of Numbers. Those encampments were of so little account in leaving any impress on the Hebrew character, they were in every sense so temporary, that the scholarship which is worthily directed to the tenth chapter of Genesis is here squandered on an unremunerative theme. Yet the record of the earlier chapters of Numbers gives us all that we really need, and tells its story with even greater explicitness than does the



narrative of Exodus relative to the approach to Sinai. There is little doubt that the Israelites took what seemed the most direct course to the land which they sought, passing, as it would seem, up to the great elevated plateau known as the Tih; and when drawing near to the confines of Palestine, delegating forty of their number to go up and explore the land. The main body, meanwhile, passed down into the long trough of the Arabah, between the limestone wall of the Tih on the west and the mountains of Seir, or Edom, on the east, to Kadesh, a district lying, it would seem, in the north-western part of this sunken valley. No trace of the city of Kadesh appears to be remaining; but Kadesh seems to have been a district as well as a city; and of all the locations which have been assigned to it, that given by Robinson appears to be the one best authenticated. The Desert of Paran, often alluded to in the Bible, is, taken in a general sense, the broad tract known as the Tih Plateau; while that of Zin seems to be the sterile valley of the Arabah. The five deserts of the whole peninsula are these: Shur, or Etham, near the Isthmus of Suez; Sin, the western plain, embracing not only the tract alluded to as El Murkah, crossed by the Israelites after leaving Elim and the encampment by the sea, but extending down nearly to the southern extremity of the peninsula, and comprising the plain known at the present time as El Kaa; Sinai, the plains around the mountain of the law-giving; Paran, the Tih Plateau; and Zin, the valley of the Arabah. Kadesh lay on the confines and between both the latter; hence it is sometimes reckoned as belonging to the one, and sometimes to the other. The reader of the Bible history need not be reminded of the hasty and desper-

ate plunge which the Israelites made to seize a mountain of the Amalekites, as it is called in the narrative, nor of the signal defeat which they encountered. The region is so little known at present, that I dare not attempt to pronounce upon the hypothesis that that mountain was a second small plateau, superimposed upon the north-eastern portion of the great Tih plain. Enough that it appears tenable. At just what time the conflict with the king of Arad, one of the walled cities in the south of Palestine, took place, it is difficult to say ; but this is plain : the country which they sought to take was too strong for them. Caleb and Joshua were the only ones of the spies who gave a favorable account of the comparative ease of capturing the land ; and in both assaults the Israelites were evidently completely routed. We see them, in both instances, pushed back down the Arabah Valley.

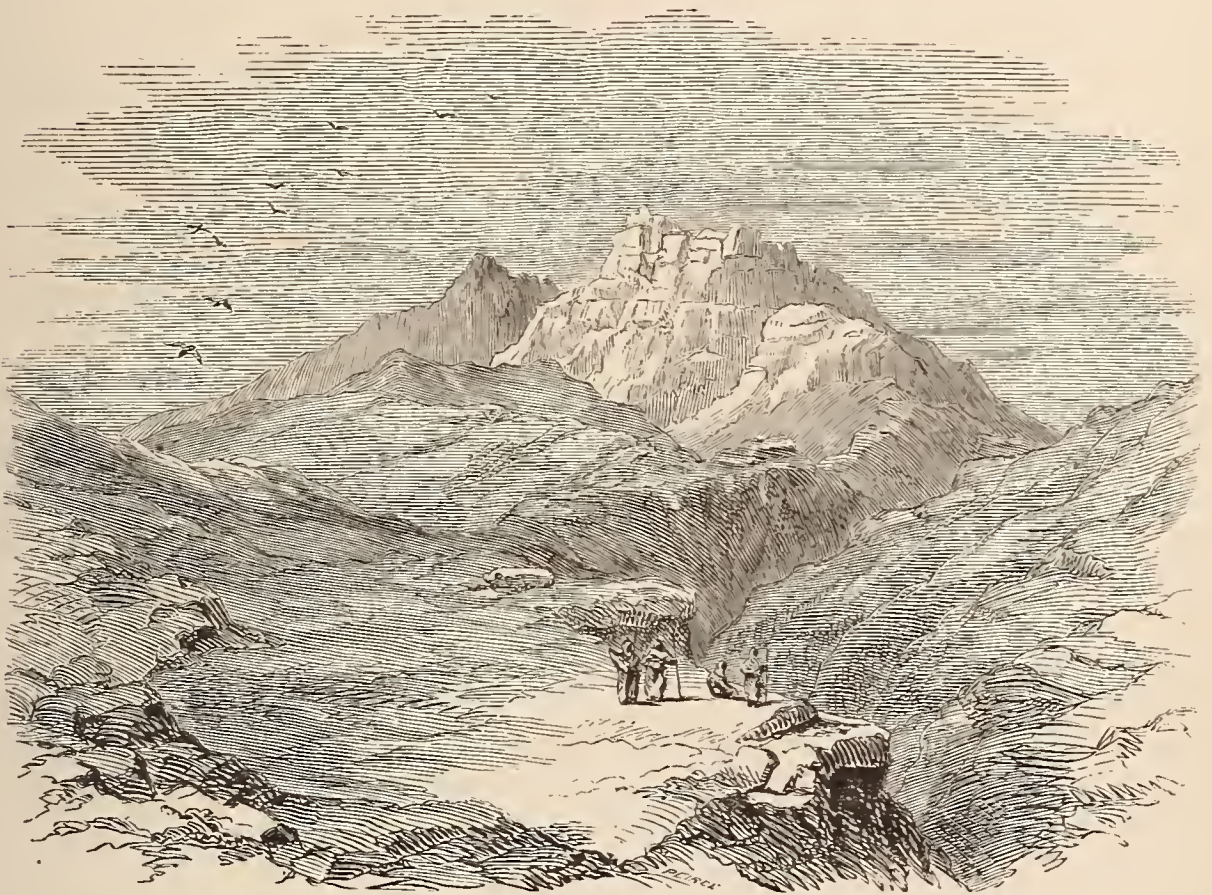
Very near them rose the lofty range of Edom, — the mountains of Seir. A valley known as Wady Ghaweir runs eastward from the Arabah, cleaving the range, and allowing free passage across the country once held by the Edomites. This was in the possession of the descendants of Esau ; but if permission were granted to the Israelites to pass through, they might easily march northward, east of the Dead Sea, and enter Palestine by another approach. The south was, as they saw, thoroughly guarded. The “Canaanites and Amalekites dwelt in the valley,” meaning the northern part of the Arabah and along the shores of the Dead Sea ; while the Amorites held the high land of the south of Palestine. They had proved themselves more than a match for the Israelites, and now a new way must be sought ; but the Edomites were unwilling that their kinsmen should pass through their territory. Then

follows that long period of distressing waiting, — those years while the old generation was dying and being buried, those thirty-eight years of aimless wandering, and of more purposeless encampments. To all appearance, they did not travel much out of the Arabah Valley, one of the most barren, arid, and frightful portions of the whole desert. Of the many places mentioned in connection with their wanderings, Mt. Hor and Ezion-geber stand out with perfect distinctness. Whenever these names are mentioned we know where we are. Mt. Hor, the place of Aaron's burial, his place of sepulture being marked at the present day by a Mahometan *wely*, or tomb, overhangs the eastern edge of the Arabah, not far from its northern extremity, while Ezion-geber lay at the northern end of the Gulf of Akabah. We see the Israelites at this place; we see them farther north again, at the foot of Hor, and yet again at Kadesh; in despair, doubtless, disgusted with their provisions, famished for want of water, and dying by thousands.

Reference has already been made to the journey of the spies northward. Their course is perfectly plain. They passed out of the Desert of Zin by the narrow pass of Sufa, or Zephath, not far from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, thence to Hebron, and so up the whole line of watershed along which Abraham and Jacob and Jacob's sons had passed, till they reached Rehob, not far from Dan, a short distance west of Lake Huleh. Just north of Rehob is the opening of the long valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains. and in that valley lay the ancient city of Hamath. We read, therefore, in the account of the spies' course, that "they searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto



Rehob, as men come to Hamath." Some have imagined that another Rehob is meant, lying farther north, and nearer the city of Hamath, which was in the narrowest part of the Cœle-Syrian valley, and where the Orontes breaks through a wild mountain gorge ; but this seems to me a false view. The spies were absent forty days, and, with the going and



MOUNT HOR.

returning, the time would be entirely consumed in traversing the district between Dan and Beersheba, or, which is almost identical, between Rehob, close by Dan, and the Desert of Zin. Eshcol, whose grapes have received undying celebrity from their visit, is a valley under the very shadow of the city of Hebron ; and the grapes of that spot, though perhaps not equaling those which the virgin soil once produced there, are

still remarkable both for size and flavor. We get, in the report of the spies, one glimpse of the inhabitants of Hebron, giants in stature compared with the diminutive Hebrews. The Israelites were at Kadesh when the spies returned. The report was brief: and, notwithstanding the good things which it confirmed to exist in Palestine, was not a little discouraging. They reported to Moses (Num. xiv. 27-30), "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this [the grapes] is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in that land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak [the giants] there. The Amalekites dwell in that land of the south; and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and by the coast of Jordan." Of some of these tribes we have already caught glimpses. A portion of the Amalekites we saw in Wady Feiran, stopping the way of the Israelites as they advanced to Sinai, — a widely-scattered tribe, wandering over the Tih Plateau, the south country, and the Arabah Valley; the Jebusites have been referred to as the inhabitants of the rock which became the subsequent Jerusalem; the Hittites we saw dwelling in the neighborhood of Hebron, and selling to Abraham the grave of Machpelah; while the Amorites have been referred to as inhabiting the hill country in the southern part of Palestine. It is manifest, at a glance, that they all possessed a higher civilization than the wandering Hebrews. Their walled cities, and their culture of the grape, indicate that they were far in advance of the race which had not risen from the estate of slaves to the strength and culture which were only to accrue with the lapse of centuries.



From the results of this preliminary survey of Palestine, let us come back to the wanderings of the Israelites. It should not be supposed that they were on the move from day to day ; their course was in all probability not unlike that of the Arabs of the present time. They must advance in obedience to the necessities of pasturage for their flocks, and of water for themselves. He who hears even the young ravens which cry, would move the pillar of cloud and of fire, so as in ordinary cases to minister to these natural wants. Could they have gone to that romantic rock city of Petra, as Stanley fancies they did, though I think without reason, they would have found shade and water and pasturage, and their thirty-eight years in and near Kadesh would not have been intolerable. It seems to be one of the few weak points in Stanley's admirable work, — this fanciful identification of Kadesh, the place where Miriam died, and where the scarcity of water is expressly alluded to, with the profusely-watered city of Petra. And here I can not refrain from paying a passing tribute to the rare thoroughness as well as to the peculiar beauty of Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine." That tenacious notion that a picturesque, fascinating, brilliant work must necessarily be superficial and unreliable, has caused some to entertain the conviction that because Stanley has the former qualities in an eminent degree, he must be destitute of the sterling qualities which characterize the heavier Robinson. It is not so. His work is in every respect a classic. Chateaubriand and Lamartine wrote books on Palestine, whose peculiar, indeed whose only value lay in their style ; but Stanley, while always ornate, rich, picturesque, and yet chaste, betrays the ripest scholarship and a thoroughly-trained judgment. Nor is it to be said that there are no



grounds for identifying Kadesh with Petra; there are some which are entitled to consideration, although the burden of evidence is against them.

Not being allowed to pass through the rocky hights of Edom, we see the Israelites, at the end of forty years, move down to the Gulf of Akabah once more, round the lower extremity of the mountains of Seir, and pass up along their eastern base. The Edomites, descendants of Esau, seem to have cherished no ill-will toward their distant kinsmen, notwithstanding their former refusal, and bring out provisions to them as they pass by. It is a quick march. The narrative makes no halt till it takes them to the borders of Moab. Only two incidents are brought into distinct notice: the one occurring apparently at the outset, the latter while the Israelites were well on their way. The first of these was the death of Aaron, on Mt. Hor; the second was the fatal biting of the serpents. The discovery, by Burckhardt, of venomous reptiles near the northern portion of the Gulf of Akabah, seems not only to corroborate the striking veracity of the narrative, but to fix the place where this evil befell the wandering Israelites.



## VII.

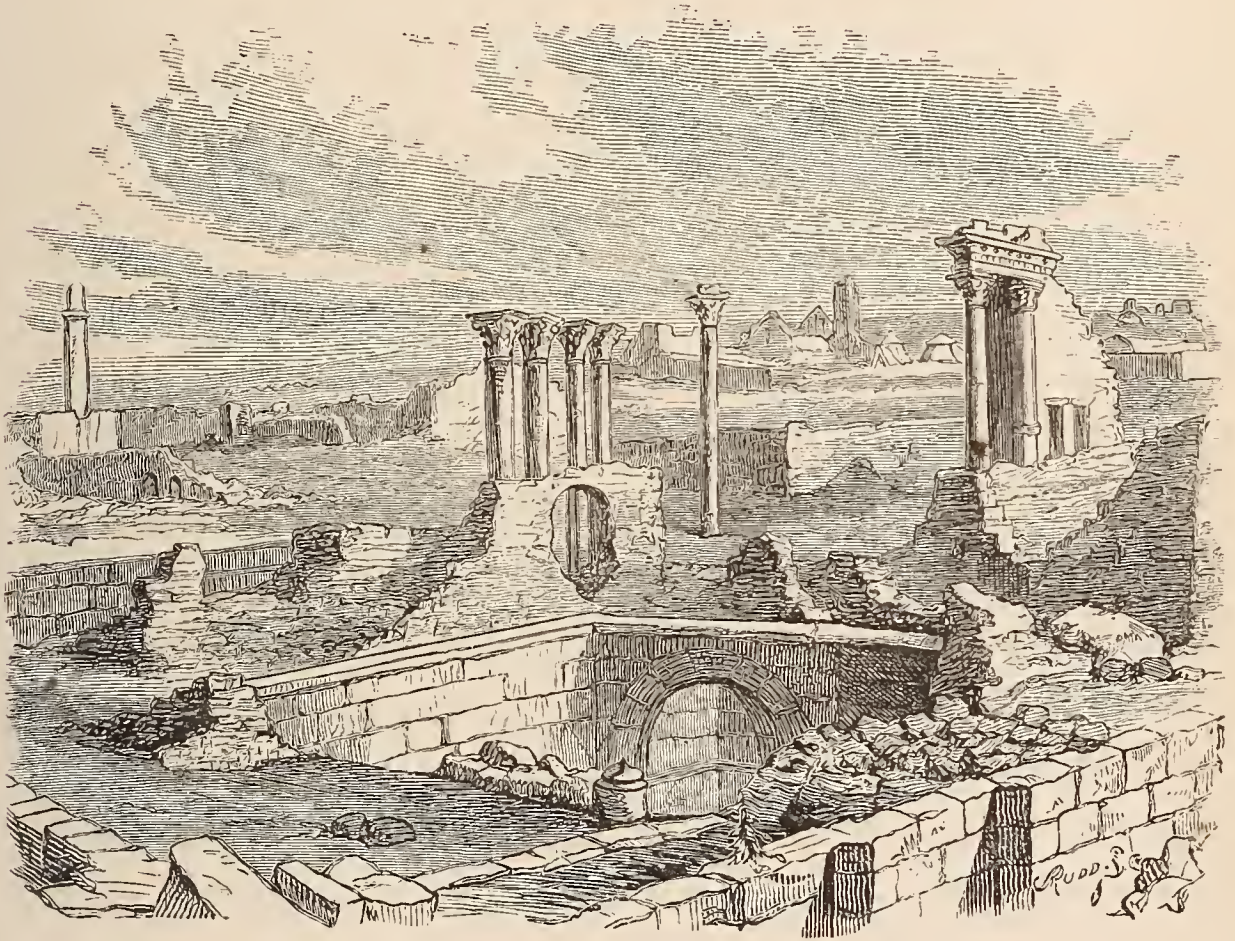
### THE TRANS-JORDANIC DISTRICT.

WE have now advanced to a new field, a kind of intermediate link between the Wilderness and the Land of Promise. That district, east of the Dead Sea and the Jordan, has already come into view once or twice. We have seen the descent of Chedorlaomer and the kings of the East upon it, their onslaught upon the ancient tribe of Emim, east of the Dead Sea, and the Zamzummim, or Zuzim, farther north, east of the lower Jordan ; we have seen Jacob crossing the mountains of Gilead, erecting his memorial pile at Mahanaim, on the Jabbok, and passing thence down the defile to the Jordan ; but further than this it has not come into any prominence. Nor does it do so in the subsequent Bible story ; for although the territories of Ammon and Moab, of Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh, have some relation to the history of Israel, yet it is only slight and incidental. At the time when the Hebrews entered that district, the land was in a state of convulsion, and the circumstances of the king of Moab were desperate. Here, as in all our previous studies, history is the best companion of geography ; indeed, the two are inseparable if we would view the Holy Land as a living and not a dead thing. Let us glance, then, at the country in the state in which the Israelites found it. The ancient tribes of the Rephaim, the Emim, and Zuzim, had faded out, and the de-

scendants of Lot had taken possession of the whole of the land. The children of one of Lot's daughters held the southern region, the district of Moab; those of the other daughter had gone farther north, and gave their own name of Ammon to the land. Their race was a prolific one; and, at the time of the Israelitish invasion, about five hundred years subsequent to the time when Abraham and Lot parted upon Bethel, we find the Moabites and Ammonites great nations. Their character was different. Moab was peaceful and inoffensive; Ammon, warlike and turbulent. The Moabites were quiet herdsmen, possessing admirable grazing lands, and raising great flocks and herds; the Ammonites were the Bedouins of the day, a nomadic, fierce, thriftless race. It is, therefore, easy to make out from the biblical account the boundaries of Moab; but Ammon shades away northward into the hills, and eastward into the desert, in a manner which defies our attempt to establish its limits. Moab consisted of three divisions, each bearing a distinctive name, and each perfectly well to be made out at the present day. The tract lying south of the Wady Mojeb, or Arnon, a stream flowing into the Dead Sea, just north of the well-known peninsula, is alluded to in Scripture as the "field of Moab;" the tract lying between the Arnon and the Jabbok is called the "land of Moab;" while the low tract close by the Jordan and opposite Jericho bears the name of the "plains of Moab." The finest tract for grazing purposes was and still is the second one mentioned, the land of Moab, a fine upland, a broken plateau, bounded on the west by that great mountain-wall which follows the whole course of the Jordan, and broken here and there by hights which rise conspicuously above the elevated



plains. It is a country but little known even at the present day; Burckhardt, Seetzen, Buckingham, Irby and Mangles, Tristram, and a few other bold and enterprising travelers only, having traversed it, and brought us what little we know of it: while the country farther north, the territory of Ammon, has been crossed by a fearless few, — Porter, Wetzstein,



BOZRAH (of Moab), Jer. xlviii. 24.

and Graham, — in addition to those who have brought us what we know of Moab. Many of the greatest explorers, including such men as Robinson and Stanley, have scarcely set foot upon the land east of the Jordan. The wild character of the Bedouins there, taken in connection with the slight relation of that district to the history of the Jews, has shut it off; and

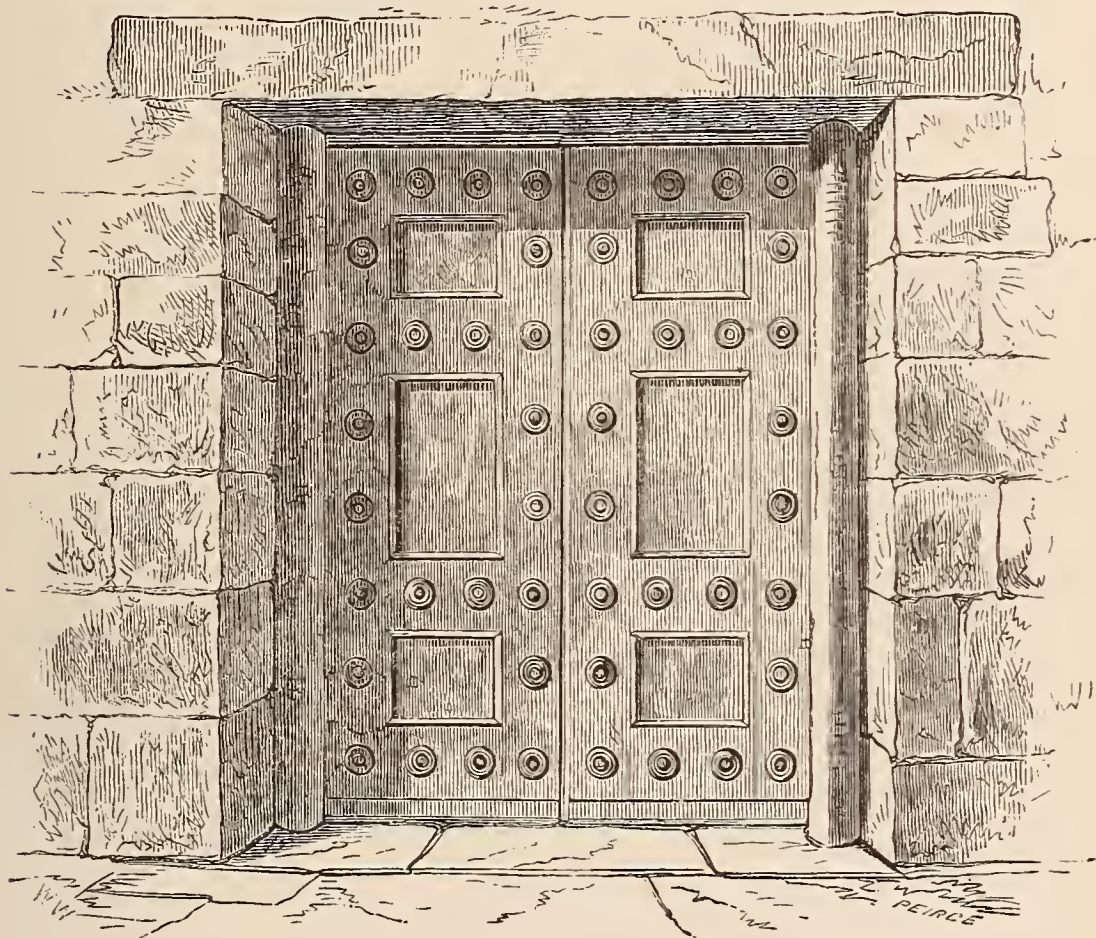
out of the hundreds of travelers who go annually to Jerusalem, Hebron, Nazareth, and Jericho, scarcely one passes the Jordan and treads the land of Moab.

At the time of the Israelitish invasion, the fierce tribe of the Amorites had sent a portion of their large numbers away from the hill-country north of Hebron across the Jordan, to subdue the rich pasture-lands there. Their strength had made them more than a match for the peaceful and inoffensive Moabites; and they had easily wrested from the latter their best land, and driven them into the "field of Moab," the tract south of the Arnon. The Israelites did not pass through this territory; but, having crossed the Zared and then the Arnon, they went farther toward the sun-rising, and entered the comparatively bare and desolate country east of the "land of Moab." The king of the Amorites, Sihon (his name is preserved), had established his capital at Heshbon, a place which bears the same name even to-day (Hesban), and whose ruins, though not important, display the same cisterns which made the fish-pools of Heshbon noted even in Solomon's time. The war against this Amorite king, Sihon, was short and decisive. The whole of the Belka, or country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, passed into the hands of the Israelites.

After the conquest over this formidable "Sihon, king of the Amorites," the Israelites do not appear to have hastened to the Jordan; but, impressed with the conviction that no enemies must be left in their rear to follow and harass them, they marched far northward, past the Gilead range, to that great and fruitful tract of Bashan, south of Damascus and east of the Sea of Galilee. The capital city, or one of the two



capitals, rather, was Edrei, whose ruins, according to Mr. Porter, may be seen even now, on a high, isolated bluff at the south-west corner of the Ledja. But whether this place, or Dera on the Hieromax, designates the site of the ancient Edrei, the journey was a long one northward. The recent discoveries made by Mr. Porter, and announced in his work

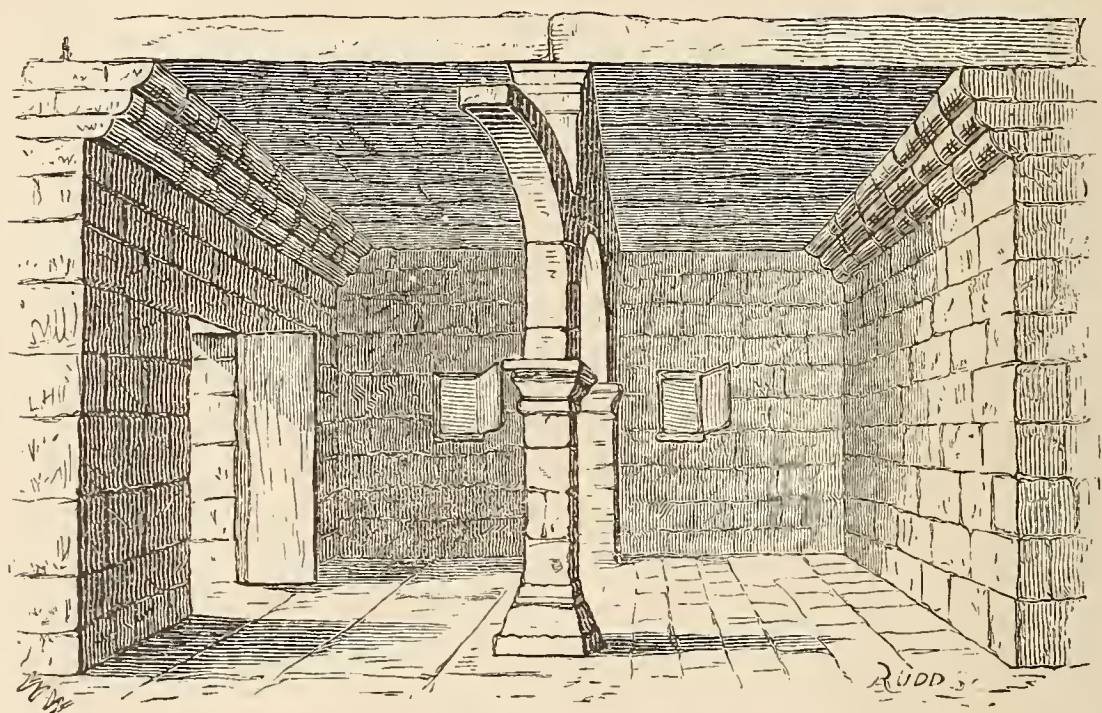


STONE DOOR OF AN ANCIENT HOUSE.

called "The Giant Cities of Bashan," are of a very great interest. The construction of the houses, and the size of the sarcophagi found there, are such as to convince him that he has really brought to light the very home and tomb of Og, king of Bashan. However this may be, there is a striking coincidence between the cities of Bashan, as they are de-



scribed in Deut. iii. 5, and those cities — they can not be called ruins — which Prof. Porter has brought to light within the last few years. “All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars.” All of these features remain, and, in addition to them, places of sepulture, which appear as if intended for persons of no ordinary stature. Moreover, we are distinctly, though only incidentally, told that Og, king of Bashan, remained, of the race of giants; and his iron bed-



INTERIOR, SHOWING STONE ROOF.

stead was long preserved in token of the gigantic stature of the man.

The Israelites overran the whole of Bashan, subduing Argob, with its threescore cities, that tract of black rock east of the Sea of Galilee, so little known to us till Mr. Porter brought its distinctive characteristics to light. They were then masters of the whole tract east of the Jordan. From the Arnon on the south to Hermon and the borders of

Damascus on the north, the land was theirs. It was a tract obviously adapted to pasturage, and immediately caught the eye of the two tribes which were especially eminent for the number and excellence of their flocks. The tribes of Reuben and Gad requested to have their portions assigned to them on the east side of the Jordan, and their request was granted, on the condition that the fighting men should cross the river with the other tribes, and, after the conquest was effected, should return and live with their flocks. The division was as follows: Moab was allowed to retain the territory south of the Arnon, and at the same time to hold the cities of the tract taken by the Israelites from the Amorite king. Indeed, the fact that Moab was always more highly civilized than the tribe of Reuben allowed the two to live side by side in tolerable quietness; the cities Heshbon, Aroer, Dibon, and the rest being held by the Moabites, while the pastoral Reubenites dwelt in tents, and tended their flocks on that fine level pasture-land. The territory distinctively held by Reuben, then, was from the Arnon on the south to a line running east and west through Heshbon. It was bounded by the Dead Sea and the Jordan on the west, while eastward the town of Aroer marked its limits. As the territory of Reuben, it comes into no prominence in the Bible. Long known as Moab, it receives curse on curse; the subtle idolatries practiced there, and, in especial, the worship of its god, Chemosh, having exercised an irresistible charm over the Israelites for many centuries subsequent to the conquest. But Reuben takes an altogether subordinate position. It gives not a hero to Israel, it gives not even a solitary name to the long list of Bible worthies. It sinks into the peaceful



occupation of sheep-tending, and gradually disappears, its sons being merged, to a certain extent, in the primitive tribes of the region.

Gad, which took possession of the lands farther north, was of a different stamp. While agriculture was its chosen calling, so that it too wanted to have a share in the rich grazing-lands east of the Jordan, it was tumultuous, wild, martial, and prolific in heroes. While Reuben gave none, Gad gave Elijah and Jephthah, men whose names, in their distinctive way, are among the best remembered in the long procession of Jewish historical characters. The territory of Gad is more indefinitely marked than that of Reuben; but as it was first assigned, it extended from a line drawn east and west through Heshbon northward to the Jabbok, embracing the southern half of the mountains of Gilead. Subsequently, the ambitious, pushing spirit of the Gadites made them more than a match for the warlike and powerful half-tribe of Manasseh, which occupied Bashan and the northern half of the Gilead range, and we see the more southern tribe thrusting itself northward to the very verge of the Hauran. I should not omit to state that in the original allotment to Gad was the whole of the eastern bank of the Jordan, the fertile valley which lies between the river and the rock-wall on the east, and which extends from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea.

There was still another tribe, — one which has been alluded to by name, — Half-Manasseh, which shared in the division of the lands east of the Jordan. The cause which prompted Reuben and Gad to ask for a tract there was not operative with Half-Manasseh. This powerful tribe, one of the most warlike and grasping of all, craved the privilege of seizing and



possessing that natural fastness, the northern half of Gilead, and the almost inaccessible rocks of Argob and of Eastern Bashan. It would seem that the conquest of Og had so far subdued the land, that Israel had no further occasion to fear; yet to enter into it and possess it wholly required a longer and



MOUNT HERMON, FROM NEAR TIBERIAS.

more stoutly-contested campaign than the speedy one against Og. To accomplish this was the wish, as it was the act, of the powerful half-tribe of Manasseh. This territory, when subdued, comprised that part of Gilead which was north of the Jabbok, and extended north as far as to Hermon. The ancient importance of that grand, snow-crowned peak is testi-

fied by the fact that the Bible gives us, in connection with the story of the Israelitish conquests, four names for Hermon, three in addition to its familiar designation, — Sion, or the elevated, the Sidonian name Sirion, and the Amorite name Shenir. Not more marked is it now, as the natural boundary of Western Palestine, than it was when the Israelites were capturing the district east of the river. It was then the “snowy” Hermon ; and one of the names by which the Arabs designate it at the present day likewise means “the snowy.”

From the preceding sketch it will be seen that the Israelites broke away at once from the limit which had been set by Abraham when he parted from Lot ; indeed, they wandered so far from it that the circle of the Jordan, that rich intervale which accompanied the winding course of the river, originally chosen by Lot, was included in the domain of Gad. The only adherence to the compact between Abraham and Lot is seen in the fact that the Israelites did not attack the Moabites and the Ammonites, both the descendants of Lot by the dark incest of his daughters. The war was against the Amorites and the king of Bashan, not against the distant kinsmen of the invading Israelites.

Only one more people comes prominently into view before we see the Israelites taking their way down into the Jordan Valley opposite Jericho. They are a branch of the Midianites. We have already seen portions of this tribe in the Sinai Peninsula ; we have alluded too to their main home on the eastern side of the Gulf of Akabah ; but now we discover that they were a tribe very widely scattered, skirting the eastern border of Seir, Moab, and Ammon, and extending as far as to the Euphrates. Balaam, the great heathen prophet, was



a Midianite, yet his home was in Mesopotamia. The influence of this corrupt race was only bad ; the profligacy and licentiousness which it engendered being so great as to bring down a plague upon the people, and make it necessary for Israel to visit them with an almost exterminating war, — a war in which five of the kings of Midian perished, and in which Balaam, the great prophet, also fell by the sword.



MOUNTAINS OF MOAB, FROM THE HILLS NEAR JERICO.

The exact position of the two mountains, which have been made famous as well as interesting, the one by the ascent of Balaam, the other by that of Moses, remains, and will probably always remain, unknown to us. Among the peaks of Moab are many from which the same commanding view could be had which was gained by both Balaam and Moses ; for although, as one looks at the rock-wall of Moab from Palestine, it seems to have no commanding summits, yet those



who have crossed the Jordan, and explored those almost unvisited spaces, report that the mountains have a much more marked individuality than would be believed possible. According to the testimony of the Englishman Palmer, "When their summits are attained, a wholly new scene bursts upon the view, unlike any thing which could be expected from below, unlike any thing in Western Palestine. A wide tableland appears, tossed about in wild confusion of undulating downs, clothed with rich grasses throughout, and, in the northern parts, with magnificent forests of sycamore, beech, terebinth, ilex, and enormous fig-trees." While the rich, well-wooded, well-watered districts of Moab, Gilead, and Bashan were to be seen, in all those charms which fascinated the heart of Reuben and Gad, the distant view, that across the Jordan, is not to-day, and could hardly have been then, such as to correspond with the glowing language of the spies who had been sent up from the desert. It may be true, as Stanley suggests, that to one who stands on the heights of Moab and looks westward across the Jordan at the hills of Judah and Ephraim, "their monotonous character is lost, and the range when seen as a whole is in the highest degree diversified and impressive;" yet those brown and treeless hills, and those waterless ravines which could be traced westward from the Jordan Valley, would contrast most unfavorably with the rich and well-watered land east of the river. Robinson testifies that nowhere in the whole course of his wanderings did he meet such a wealth of springs and running brooks as in the district south-east of the Dead Sea. And most of the territory northward is not unworthy to be ranked far beyond Palestine proper in all the elements which enrich a people.

The Bible shows us, in its indirect way, that the trans-Jordanic district had from time immemorial been in the possession of the most powerful tribes in the whole region. Those allusions to the Rephaim, the Emim, and Zamzummim, merely indicate that those races of giants held, by the tenure of their might, the most valuable territory of all Southern Syria. On what grounds, then, do we find Moses straining his sight to look across the river, striving to catch a glimpse of what he was not permitted to enter? Caleb and Joshua, his near and trusted friends, had traversed the whole length of Western Palestine, from Beersheba to Dan; he might have learned from them that what lay beyond was not a rival to that which the valor of the Israelites had already secured. The original promise made to Abraham extended to the Euphrates. Without taking one thing into account, it would indeed appear wonderful that the Hebrew leader should have wished to take further risks, and not have settled down into the quiet and secure pastoral life to which the plains of Moab and the slopes of Gilead invited the wearied tribes. Yet, though the Scripture does not hint at what passed in the mind of Moses, we can not doubt that a man so observant as he would see that the country was without natural means of defense. At the north, in Bashan, and in parts of Gilead, the rugged ravines and frowning battlements of rock might serve as a partial protection; yet only a race always in readiness for war, a nation of warrior-shepherds, could hold, with any security, the pasturelands of the south. As the Emim and Zamzummim had quailed before Chedorlaomer and the other kings of the East, and had at last been exterminated by the Moabites and the Ammonites; as the Ammonites had just yielded to Moses,

and even Og, in the intrenchments of Bashan, had confessed him conquerer, so in turn the Israelites might be the prey of some stronger and more disciplined race which should sweep through that unprotected land. Therefore it was, as it appears to me, that his eye measured the long line of hills across the Jordan, traversed the steep gorges which run up westward from the Jordan to the great dorsal ridge of Palestine, and felt secure in the thought that the "mountains of the Amorites," as the great line of watershed is called in the Bible, — the high lands from Hebron to Shechem, — would afford the most secure and undisturbed shelter to his people, age after age. It is not a little curious that the only tradition claiming any value in that country is the Mahometan one that puts the mountain where Moses died on the west bank of the Jordan, and north-west of the Dead Sea. The ruins of a small mosque attest the mountain of the Moslem tradition. Yet the tale is clearly an idle one. Though the place of Moses' sepulture is closely concealed by the Scriptures, and though we do not know which mountain of the rocky tract Pisgah was consecrated to the Moabite god Nebo, and bore his name, still there can be no doubt that it lay on the eastern side of the Jordan, and confronted the city of Jericho. The spot which has been pointed out with the most probability is a peak a short distance southward of Heshbon, which was ascended by Mr. Porter, and from which a view of surpassing extent could be gained. From that, or any one of the range to which it belongs, Balaam could look across the Dead Sea and see the steep rocks where the Kenites clustered, and which served them instead of houses ; he could also reach with his eye the south country, and discern the tents of the



roving Amalekites ; and, in the distance, he could descry the blue line of the Mediterranean, over which the ships of Chittim should sail ; while far to the south were the purple hills of Edom. Nor is Moses represented as compassing an area any less limited. From Dan, at the extreme north, and under the very shadow of Hermon, to the south country, the home of Abraham and Isaac, from the plain of Jericho to the Mediterranean, — all this is distinctly recorded in the closing verses of Deuteronomy as falling within the scope of his vision. Balaam lived to go down, and was slain fighting against the nation his tongue was constrained to bless, while Moses remained in the mountain and died ; “but no man knoweth of his sepulcher to this day.”

“On these brows,” writes Tristram, “overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, over against Jericho, we halted and gazed on a prospect on which it has been permitted to few European eyes to feast.

“As the eye turns southward \* toward the line of the ridge on which we were elevated, the peak of Jebel Shiha just stood out behind Jebel Attarus, which opened to reveal to us the situation of Kerak, though not its walls. Beyond and behind these, sharply rose Mts. Hor and Seir, and the rosy granite peaks of Arabia faded away into the distance toward Akabah. Still turning westward, in front of us, two or three lines of terraces reduced the height of the plateau as it descended to the Dead Sea, the western outline of which we could trace in its full extent, from Usdum to Feshkah. It lay like a long strip of molten metal, with the sun mirrored on its surface, waving and undulating in its farther edge, unseen

\* See map, page 40.

in its eastern limits, as though poured from some deep cavern beneath our feet. There, almost in the center of the line, a break in the ridge, and a green spot below, marked Engedi, the nest once of the Kenite, now of the wild goat. The fortress of Masada and jagged Shukif rose above the mountain line, but still far below us, and lower too than the ridge of Hebron, which we could trace as it lifted gradually from the south-west, as far as Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The buildings of Jerusalem we could not see,\* though all the familiar points in the neighborhood were at once identified. *There* was the Mount of Olives, with the church at its top, the gap in the hills leading up from Jericho, and the rounded heights of Benjamin on its other side. Still turning northward, the eye was riveted by the deep Ghor [Jordan Valley], with the rich green islets of Ain Sultân and Ain Dûk, — bright twins, nestling, as it were, under the wall of Quarantania. There, closer still beneath us, had Israel's last camp extended, in front of the green fringe which peeped forth from under the terraces in our foreground. The dark sinuous bed of the Jordan, clearly defined near its mouth, was soon lost in dim haze. Then, looking over it, the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top ; and, farther still, opened the plain of Esdraelon, the shoulder of Carmel, or some other intervening height just showing at the right of Gerizim ; while the distant bluish haze beyond it told us that there was the sea, 'the utmost sea.' It seemed as if but a whiff were needed to brush off the haze and reveal it clearly. Northward, again, rose the distinct outline of unmistakable Tabor, aided by

\* " This must have been from a slight haze, or want of power in our glasses, as the point where we stood is certainly visible from the roof of the English church."

which we could identify Gilboa and Jebel Duhy. Snowy Hermon's top was mantled with clouds, and Lebanon's highest range must have been exactly shut behind it; but in front, due north of us, stretched in long line the dark forests of Ajlun, bold and undulating, with the steep sides of mountains here and there whitened by cliffs, terminating in Mt. Gilead, behind Es Salt. To the north-east, the vast Hauran stretched beyond, filling in the horizon line to the Belka, between which and the Hauran [Bashan] there seems to be no natural line of separation. The tall range of Jebel Hauran, behind Bozrah, was distinctly visible.

"We did indeed congratulate each other on the privilege of having gazed on this superb panorama, which will live in memory's eye. 'And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar.' " — Deut. xxxiv. 1-3.

It was a descent of more than four thousand feet from the summit of those Abarim mountains which witnessed the vision of Balaam and Moses, to the "plains of Moab," the Scripture name for the eastern side of the Jordan Valley at Jericho. From the ordinary level of that table-land was a descent of about two thousand feet. The course of the Israelites may be traced with apparent certainty down the Wady Hesban, a ravine which descends from Heshbon, to the Jordan, and which still retains the name of the ancient city which lay at its head. They came out upon a place where even now may be seen the acacias which gave the place its name of Abel Shittim, "the groves of acacia-trees."



“The difference between the upper and lower ground in respect to soil and climate is as great as can be imagined. In aspect, temperature, and products, the valley is tropical in character, so that the Hebrews passed as if into another zone when they came down into it. In its southern extremity, where it opens on the gloomy, mist-covered waters of the asphaltic lake, it is not less than twelve miles in width. There, open and level on all sides, it forms a space on which many armies might be encamped. Over its whole extent it was lined and striped by thick belts of verdure, in its numerous groves of acacia and nukb, and of palms. The general direction of the valley itself for the sixty miles between Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea is tolerably straight; but deep in its very bottom the river winds — it has been said that it wriggles — along like a gigantic serpent [so that the length of the channel is not sixty, but two hundred miles]. The ground descends steeply all the way to the southern opening of the valley at the head of the Dead Sea; and its depth and closeness, as well as the reflection from the heated rocks on either side, give a tropical character to the climate. The square, monotonous range of hills that support the eastern highlands rises up on that side for nearly a hundred miles, and on the other are the gray, parched hills of Ephraim and Jordan, broken and irregular, and of much smaller altitude. The Israelites had never looked, in one view, on such an ample space, so clothed in what would seem to them a boundless profusion of luxuriant vegetation; and then there was the rapid stream, flowing deep in its low channel through the thickly-clustered trees, under whose cool shades they could stay and rest in voluptuous in-

dulgence. The aged leaders would think less of the Jordan when they remembered the broad waters of the Nile, and the fatness of the Egyptian soil ; but for the multitudes, this was the first river that they had seen ; and not even in the fertile and beautiful region above them, whence they had descended, was there more exuberant abundance, especially at the season when they came into the valley, which was the full harvest-time, when it was covered with the richest crops, and when the trees were thick with the blossoming promise of their luscious fruit. The depth of the valley, and the heights on either side reflecting the sun's rays, made the climate hot and relaxing, especially at the season when they encamped in it. But they could bear this the more easily on account of the ample shade which they found in the acacia grove where they were stationed." \*

Before we follow the Israelites across the Jordan, we must glance a moment at that allotment of Western Palestine which was made by Moses, — we know not just how long before his death, — and the details of which he received in part from the report of the spies. The account is given in the thirty-fourth chapter of Numbers, and, with some slight modifications of the eastern boundary, in the forty-seventh of Ezekiel. Though some of the minor places have not as yet been identified with existing sites, still enough remains to show how he marked out the boundaries of the Israelitish territory, and how carefully he adapted himself to the natural frontiers of the country. The southern border he defines to run from the south-eastern extremity of the Dead Sea across

\* From Drew's Scripture Lands.

the Arabian, taking in Kadesh-barnea, and skirting Edom, to pass on by the steep ascent of Akrabbim, the last pass which led from the desert up to the hill-country, and then to run westward through the towns of Hazar-addar and Azmon (neither identified with certainty) to Wady el Arish, an important ravine which runs from the heart of the Sinai Peninsula north-eastward, and emerges upon the Mediterranean shore at the old city of Rhinocolura, south-west of Gaza. This ravine bears uniformly in the Bible the name "River of Egypt," it being considered the beginning of the Egyptian domain. The southern border ended naturally at the sea. The western was the Mediterranean coast-line northward to the point where the great Lebanon range runs down almost to the shore. This would be the natural boundary, and this was at once accepted as the place where the northern line would commence. The stations on this northern border were Mt. Hor, the entrance of Hamath, Zedad, Ziphron, and Hazar-enan. Of these we must say that Mt. Hor is probably to be identified with the whole Lebanon range; no other prominent elevation, or system of elevations, in that region would seem to answer the conditions. By the entrance to Hamath is meant, with much probability, the narrow valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon, which was the most striking feature to a man of Palestine as he went northward, and passed between these great chains on his way to the important city of Hamath.

From the "entrance of Hamath" the border-line was drawn north-east toward the city of Hamath, then south-east by Ziphron, Zedad and Hazar-enan. — Num. xxxiv. 8, 9.



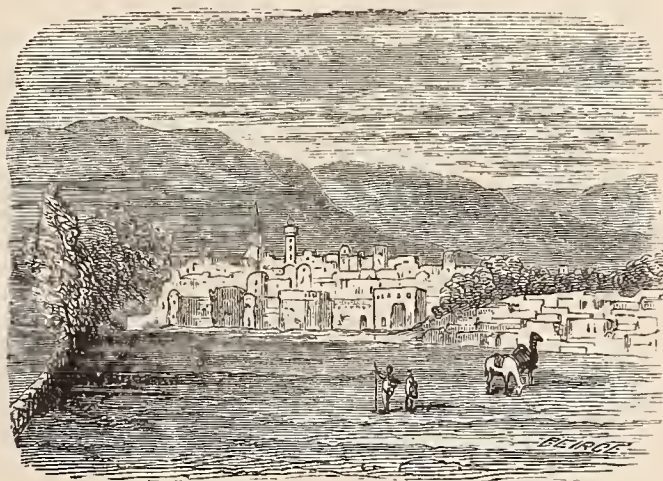
“Hamath,” writes Mr. Porter, “is a quaint old city. If one could fancy Pompeii restored and repeopled with men and women, whose moldering bones are now being dug up from its ruins, it would not present a greater contrast to the modern cities of the West than Hamath. For thirty centuries or more, life has been at a standstill there. Everything is patriarchal,—costumes, manners, salutations, occupations. The venerable elders who, with turbaned heads, flowing beards, and flowing robes, sit daily in the gates, might pass for the elders of the children of Heth, who bargained with Abraham in the gates of Kirjath-arba; and the Arab sheiks, who ever and anon pass in and out, armed with sword and spear, are no unworthy representatives of the fiery Ishmael. There is no town in the world in which primeval life can be seen in such purity as in Hamath. The people glory in it. No greater insult could be offered to them than to contrast Hamath with the cities of the infidel. The site of Hamath is picturesque. It stands in the deep glen of the Orontes, whose broad, rapid stream divides it through the center. The banks are lined with poplars, and the queer houses rise like terraces along the steep slopes. Four bridges span the stream and connect the two quarters of the city. The remains of antiquity are nearly all gone; the citadel is a vast mound of rubbish; the mosques are falling to ruin; and the private houses, though in a few cases splendidly decorated within, are shapeless piles of mud and timber. Hamath has still thirty thousand inhabitants.”

Of the other stations on the northern border, Zedan, Ziphron, and Hazar-enan, there is not much to be said, so unfixed

is our knowledge regarding those localities. Mr. Porter, in his "Five Years in Damascus," and in his later book, "The Giant Cities of Bashan," has, it is true, conjecturally identified these places with some Arab villages visited by him ; still, notwithstanding the general sobriety of his judgment, I think that in this case he has allowed his fancy to mislead him. We have not yet the data for laying down with exactness the northern and a part of the eastern boundary-line.

The eastern border, given in the forty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel, differs from that assigned by Moses in the thirty-fourth chapter of Numbers. The main difference in the two, speaking briefly, is that Moses excluded the kingdom of Damascus from the territory which he promised, while Ezekiel represents that kingdom as included in what appeared to him in his vision. According to Moses' assignment, the eastern line was to run southward from Hazar-enan to Riblah ; thence to the Sea of Chinnereth, or Galilee ; and so on down the Jordan to the Dead Sea. Neither Shepham nor Riblah, on the eastern border, is known ; Ain, the fountain spoken of in connection with this boundary, has been thought by Porter not to be the great spring of Banias ; but not only does the importance of that fountain indicate the probability that it was the one laid down in the Mosaic narration, but the older authorities agree in assigning the name "Ain," or *the* fountain, to the great Jordan spring of Banias. The exact laying-down of the Mosaic boundary-line is unnecessary ; and we can see enough to enable us to discern how clearly he described the leading geographical features of the land, — how his mind grasped the truth that the Lebanon and Anti-Leb-

anon ranges must terminate the northern border, and that the eastern one must follow the line which separates the Anti-Lebanon slopes from the great desert on the east. Here was the only place which demanded rigid knowledge and sound judgment ; and Moses demonstrated, even in this, the same wonderful command of resources which characterized his whole course.



DAMASCUS.



## VIII.

### PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN, AND BEGINNING OF THE CONQUEST.

THE passage of the Jordan by the Israelites brings us to the consideration of some of the geographical characteristics of the river. The place was "over against Jericho," and probably not far from that Helu ford which was attempted by Robinson without success, and which has been crossed without swimming by no traveler, so far as I am aware, but the brave and zealous Seetzen, in 1807. The Jordan is not fordable at all at the time of the spring flood; its muddy torrent is both too deep and too swift. Seetzen waited at least a week for the waters to subside so far as to allow him to venture to cross, and the transit, even when he did effect it, was full of peril. In the summer-time, the Jordan can be crossed at countless places; and the repeated references in the Old Testament to passages across the river must be explained by the ease with which the river could be forded in summer. But in the spring it was and is still different. The winter rains fill the wadies with a rushing, impetuous tide, and the sides of Hermon early begin to pour down the floods which the heat of March and April calls out from the snow-masses. To ford the river then would be impossible. Yet it was just then that the Israelites effected the passage. It was the harvest season, the last of March and first of April; it was within four days of the feast of the Passover,

which occurred at the same time. I am as much impressed as one can be with the draughts made upon our faith by the story of the miracle ; yet one is shut up to the necessity of accepting it. We learn the time of the year incidentally ; it is not wrought in as an essential part of the story. Moreover, there is no evidence that any boats or bridges were in use then or in latter times to effect the passage of the Jordan ; the ford was then as now (except where south of the Sea of Galilee some Roman bridges remain) the only method of transit. It is singular how faithfully the Jordan maintains at the present time the same characteristics which it is represented in the Bible as having. It was a larger stream then, for it drained a better-wooded country than it does now ; but the same dark, muddy water which it had then it has now ; and even the same thickets which lined its banks at the time of Elisha are there at the present day. At the time of the spring flood the stream is about one hundred feet in width ; narrow, compared with our American rivers, but deep and swift. We find, on the part of the Israelites, no sign of a desire to wait till the waters should subside. The same willingness to trust to the arm of God which had characterized Moses at the Red Sea now filled the heart of Joshua at the Jordan. The Israelites wind down to the river from the acacia-groves where they had tarried, the waters part, they go through, and, from the dry bed, they take up twelve stones to set up upon the western bank in memorial of the great deed which had been wrought in their behalf.

Still, while it is impossible to see how the herds and the flocks, the women and the children, the tabernacle and its service, the embalmed body of Joseph, and the whole mass of



household goods and utensils, could be transferred safely to the western bank of the Jordan without the intervention of miracle ; yet at that season able and sure-footed men could cross either by swimming, or as Seetzen did in the spring of 1807. And thus we know they did do, for the spies entered Jericho



CROSSING THE JORDAN IN MODERN TIMES.

and returned to the east bank of the river before the general transit was effected.\*

\* A very accomplished English traveler, Mr. Tristram, crossed the Jordan a few years ago at the time of the spring flood. To do it, made it necessary to ride horses across, while Arabs swam by the side and held the bridle. Mr. Tristram's account is so brief and graphic, that I gladly quote it, as it throws light upon the difficulties which beset an army without horses, and accompanied by women, children, and droves of cattle. The place where Mr. Tristram crossed the Jordan was a few miles above the ford of Jericho. He says : "On both sides the space was thronged



Gilgal, the place of the Israelites' first encampment west of the Jordan, lay on the south-east of Jericho, between it and the river. A few shapeless ruins mark the site of what long continued the most sacred locality among the Jews, for here the ark remained till it was transferred to Shiloh, upon the crest of the mountain ridge of Palestine. It lay about three miles from the fords of the Jordan, and from one to two miles from Jericho. There were several places bearing the name of Gilgal; but this was the one to which the Hebrew mind turned for ages with instinctive reverence. The twelve stones which were taken up from the bed of the river were carried to the hill of Gilgal and piled up there; the whole of the Israelites were circumcised there; and in the immediate neighborhood of Gilgal the school of the prophets sat nourishing itself from the hallowed memories of the past.

But faint memorials remain at the present day of that opulent, proud, and powerful city of Jericho, with its walls and towers, which confronted the Israelites directly after crossing the Jordan. Near the profuse spring known as that

by about fifty tall, wild-looking Bedouins, all stark naked, swimming and riding a number of bare-backed horses. For a moment my heart beat quick, as two naked men seized my horse, and a third snatched my gun from me. I felt as if set upon by naked savages. C—— was ahead of me, and I watched him and his horse led into the water by a naked Bedouin, who had taken off the bridle, and held his steed by the halter, while another hung on to his tail, and a third kept on the lee side of the saddle. The stream, rushing with tremendous force, was about fifteen feet deep. Meantime my saddle-bags were carried off and placed on a man's head; and, having taken off my outer garment, I committed myself and horse to the torrent, his halter being held by a mounted guide. The ford was very difficult and oblique, but the leader's horse was evidently experienced; while an expert swimmer kept to leeward of my saddle, and held my leg close to my horse. Following a little way with the stream, we landed on the other side. Soon we had all landed; and now the scene was of the wildest and strangest beauty. It was such as one might expect to see in a picture of Indians crossing an American river, or of the war in New Zealand, graced by the accompaniments of almost tropical vegetation. We agreed that such a spectacle was sufficient to repay all the negotiations and trouble of reaching the Jordan."

of the Sultan, there are indeed unmistakable marks of the great natural fertility of that truly tropical plain ; for, lying as it does thirteen hundred feet below the level of the sea, and shut in as it is by the bare rock-walls on both sides of the Ghor, the place has almost the temperature of an oven. A single tower, thirty feet square and forty feet high, is the most conspicuous object which remains of the Jericho of Herod's time ; but of the primitive Jericho, that of Joshua's



AIN SULTAN.

day, not a vestige is left. Some of those mounds which dot the plain might be found, if opened, to contain fragments of the ancient walls and towers, yet there will hardly be encountered a traveler enterprising enough to try to pierce the mystery of those hillocks. Fragments of arches, aqueducts, and paved roads may be seen in the neighborhood of the modern filthy village of Er Riha ; but they are only faint indications at best of that city which, although brought to ruins so early



in the history of Palestine, yet blossomed up again into such luxuriant life. Not a trace now remains to show why it was called the City of Palms, yet this tree has waved over the site of Jericho since the beginning of the present century. The rose of Jericho has utterly vanished, however, and little that depends upon the aid of man is found in that fertile valley to-day but scanty crops of barley and millet and maize. The same vices which characterized the oldest known cities of the fertile plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar,



BETWEEN BETHANY AND JERICO.

characterize the filthy Arabs who inhabit the huts of Er Riha ; nor can we be forgetful of the occupation of the woman who gave the spies reception within her own house. Licentiousness, effeminacy, bestiality, have always been the besetting sins of that tropical valley ; and never, from the time of its capture down to the time of the Saviour, does Jericho appear to have fallen so low as at the present time. Yet even in the Saviour's day the narrow pass which leads up to Jerusalem was the favorite resort of robbers, as it is to-day ;



and nowhere in Palestine is it more necessary to be on one's guard. The parable of the Good Samaritan has been re-enacted within our own day, an Englishman being the man who "fell among thieves."

The site of Jericho is about seven miles from the banks of the Jordan, and the view from the old tower commands a view of the whole extent of intervale. Much of the land is parched and blasted; that to the south, and lying between Er Riha and the Dead Sea, is a desert. No doubt the whole place has been so changed in its outward aspect, that one of the inhabitants of ancient Jericho, could he revisit the scene, would scarcely recognize the fair, fertile tract which the river-bottoms once were, in the sterile plain of the present day, showing only after the heavy rains or near the great Sultan's Spring, what is the natural capacity of the soil.

The natural highway from Jericho up to the great watershed of Palestine is not the precipice-lined gorge which runs from Jerusalem down to the Jordan by way of Bethany. It is the way which follows the broad and well-known Wady Suweinit for a distance, and then, under a changed name, runs on to Bethel. There are, indeed, three minor wadies which radiate from Wady Suweinit; but the one which emerges at Bethel is the most direct and easy. Strange to say, however, that tract is most inadequately explored; the great road by which Joshua went up to the summit of the hill-country, and the system of wadies which lies in the immediate vicinity of Bethel and Ai, are not known as they ought to be, though the road was one of those most familiar to the Israelites. Not only did they take it in their conquering march from Jericho to Ai, but that was the road which they

must follow when they went down to offer their sacrifices at Gilgal. Yet the general nature of the pass is known ; we can see the thirty thousand men marching up to Ai, south-east of Bethel and in full sight of it, though its ruins are not identified with certainty ; we can see Joshua cunningly sending his select champions into a high, unseen place beyond the city, while he, with the main body, encamped before it, and then withdrawing down the valley toward Jericho as if unable to take the city. We see the men of Ai, falling into the snare, passing confidently from the walls of their city, and pressing rapidly down toward the Jordan in pursuit of the fleeing Israelites. Then we see the delegation, five thousand strong, it would appear, emerging from their ambushade between Bethel and Ai, and pressing after the men of Ai. Joshua then turns and stems the descending tide of Canaanitish mountaineers. Caught between the two forces, the men of Ai are utterly cut off, and their city reduced to ruins. It was, of course, a momentous victory, for it opened the whole line of mountain-land to them, and the Israelites could press on without hinderance northward or southward. It was in endeavoring to make just such an ascent, south of the Dead Sea, and to reach the high land of Southern Palestine, that they were driven back to Hormah, in the Arabah, and compelled to spend those thirty-eight hopeless years of wandering. The military genius of Joshua shines out conspicuously in the first instance where he needed to use it. Moses had lived just as long as a Moses was needed, and when new emergencies rose and new talents were required, God had the right man ready for the field.



The main camp remained at Gilgal, by Jericho, even after Ai was taken ; but the next move of any importance was the setting-up of the tables of the law on Ebal and Gerizim, the two mountains between which lies that plain of Moreh, or Shechem, where Abraham lingered long enough to erect an altar, and where Jacob lived till the altercations of his sons with the Canaanites drove him from the place. Under their



NABLÜS, WITH MT. EBAL AND A PART OF MT. GERIZIM.

shadow is to be seen even now Jacob's well and the reputed tomb of Joseph. It was on Ebal that half of the tribes stood and uttered the curses on those who should disobey the law ; it was on Gerizim that the other half stood and recited those impressive blessings that are recorded in Deuteronomy. It was on Ebal, that, according to the Jewish reading of the Pentateuch (Deut. xxvii. 4), an altar inscribed with the law



was to be set up ; whereas the Samaritan version has Gerizim in the well-remembered passage. The differences in the two mountains are somewhat marked, although, perhaps, not as much so as the accounts of most travelers would lead us to infer. Ebal is a steep, rocky, bare, and uninteresting peak, and has almost never been ascended : a few shapeless ruins are almost all the human traces which it offers to the curiosity. Its height has not been closely ascertained, but it is computed to be not much short of thirty-five hundred feet. Gerizim, which is about five hundred feet lower, has been spoken of by most travelers as a “smiling” mountain, covered with verdure, and showing on its very face why it was chosen as the mount of blessings. This is surely an exaggerated statement of what rests upon a very slight foundation. Indeed, it would not be right to omit saying that some of our most reliable modern tourists deny Gerizim any superiority whatever in charm over Ebal. It has from the remotest period been accounted a sacred mountain ; and it is supposed by Stanley to have been the height to which Abraham brought Isaac for sacrifice ; though I can not yield assent to this view. Gerizim is the resort of pilgrims every year to witness the celebration of the passover ; and one of the most interesting portions of Stanley’s Lectures on the Jewish Church is that appendix in which he gives his own account, as an eye-witness, of the celebration, in this age, of that ancient feast, with ritualistic observances little changed by the lapse of four thousand years.

The law having been set up on Ebal or Gerizim (according as the Jews or Samaritans are right in their respective readings), the next step of the Israelites was to move quickly

southward along the Palestine watershed, and then down the ravine leading from Bethel to Gilgal and Jericho. It was during the brief pause after their return that the memorable visit of the Gibeonites occurred, which led Joshua into a net, not so dangerous as that which he set for the people of Ai, but quite as subtle. I need not remind the reader how the inhabitants of Gibeon and the neighboring cities of Beeroth, Kirjath-jearim, and Chephirah took moldy bread and burst wine-skins, and old clothes and worn-out shoes, and traversed the ten or twelve miles which separated their homes from Gilgal, and pretended to come from a distant country for the purpose of testifying their allegiance to the God of the Israelites. The trick was at length discovered, and, although Joshua could not forfeit his word to spare their lives, they were degraded into hewers of wood and drawers of water, and compelled to discharge these laborious and menial services for the Israelites age after age. Those places have all been brought to light by the indefatigable Robinson. Their present names are but little changed from those they bore in ancient times, Gibeon being Geba, Beeroth Bireh, and Chephirah Kefur. Kirjath-jearim has lost its name, however, and is to be identified with Kuryet-el-enab. They lie from six to ten miles north of Jerusalem, a little west of the line of watershed, Kirjath-jearim being at the head of an important wady which leads toward the Mediterranean coast.

The anger which was kindled in the hearts of the Canaanite kings against the Gibeonites for not resisting the invaders at the point of the sword, led directly to that great and decisive battle of Beth-horon which put the Israelites in substantial possession of the country. The five kings who conspired to

destroy Gibeon for its pusillanimous conduct, were those of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon, — all of them places of unquestionable importance. Of Jerusalem and Hebron I need not speak, except to say that these two cities, which have before met us only in the attitude of peace, here confront us with the stern face of war. Abraham and Jacob were men who passed up and down through Palestine, cherishing a promise of future possession, but taking no steps to attain it, and carefully abstaining from coming into conflict with the people, always buying land instead of wresting it, and speaking not imperiously but peaceably to the Canaanites. But when Joshua came, there was a change; and the chief city of the Jebusites and that of the Hittites arrayed themselves against the man who came not with flocks and herds, but at the head of a powerful army. Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon lay south-west of Jerusalem and west of Hebron; the first of them on the western margin of the hill-country, the last two on the rich plain below. Jarmuth is identified, beyond much doubt, with the modern village of Jarmu; Lachish and Eglon, with Um Lakis and Ajlan. It was not at those places, however, that the kings encountered the Israelites. They united their forces and marched up to Gibeon, on the high land north of Jerusalem, the modern Geba, for the purpose of destroying it. The people sent a messenger directly to Joshua at Gilgal. The Israelitish army was at once on the move up the rocky defiles which lead from the Valley of the Jordan to the top of the mountain-land; their first duty being to defend their new and crafty allies, the Gibeonites; their next, to go forward and capture the country for themselves. The news reached Joshua in the night, and



before it was day the Israelitish host had traversed the ravine, and were before the walls of Gibeon. And then began that memorable battle of Beth-horon, one of the decisive struggles of the world. The Israelites pursued their enemy northward for about four miles, over a tract sufficiently broken, but along the main coast-line of the country. At Upper Beth-horon, its place perfectly marked at the present day by the village of Upper Beit-ur, the Canaanites turned down to the west through the broad and steep pass which led to the village of Lower Beth-horon. It is the same pass which is taken by all the heavy travel between Jaffa and Jerusalem. The lighter travel comes up by a pass west of Jerusalem, and more direct ; but the pass of Beit-ur, the ancient Beth-horon, is one of the most striking features of the country. Mr. Grove says graphically of it, " With the upper village the descent commences ; the road, rough and difficult even for the mountain-paths of Palestine, now over sheets of smooth rock flat as the flagstones of a London pavement, now over the upturned edges of the limestone strata, and now amongst the loose rectangular stones so characteristic of the whole of this district. There are, in many places, steps cut, and other marks of the path having been artificially improved." Near the lower end of the path is the side-valley passing by the low hill on which stood the village of Ajalon, the modern Yalo, and whose name is always remembered in connection with Joshua's prayer, as he set forward that eventful morning. It is plain that the Canaanites were taken by surprise, when, in the cool of the day, they found the Hebrew troops upon them. There was a continual rout all the way from Gibeon to Upper Beth-horon ; and, to add to all, just as

the Canaanites were taking that steep and dangerous pass from Upper to Lower Beth-horon, a tremendous hailstorm broke upon them, effecting more slaughter than even the arms of the Israelites. This pitiless storm followed them till they reached the city of Azekah, identified by Porter with the modern village of Zechariah, on the verge of the highlands south-west of Jerusalem. It would appear that the Israelites did not pass on at once to Azekah, but in the early morning, the victory being complete, left the hailstorm on the western slope of the hill-country to do its devastating work, while



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE BATTLES OF AI AND BETH-HORON.

they went back to Gilgal. But soon a messenger brought word that the five kings had taken refuge in a cave at Makkedah, near Azekah. Up from Gilgal on the same day the Israelites marched, reached the highlands about Gibeon, and swept down the pass of Beth-horon to Makkedah. The slaughter of the kings, their burial in the cave, and the destruction of Makkedah, closed that memorable day. It does not need any argument to convince us of the miraculous answer to Joshua's prayer, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon." The march up from Gilgal to Gib-

eon was effected in the night, it is true ; but between the break of the next day and its close, Joshua marched from Gibeon to Upper Beth-horon, some distance down the pass, back to Gilgal, up from Gilgal to Gibeon again, and down the whole length of the pass to Makkedah. These things, being told in a simple, unaffected manner, would seem to shut us up to one of two conclusions : either that the Israelites could pass over rough roads and through narrow defiles with supernatural speed, not to speak of the immense draughts on their energy and strength, or that the day was of no common length that could permit them to do all this. The distance traversed can not have been less than forty miles, not to reckon the night-march. The nature of the roads is such that to go up from Gilgal to Gibeon and back in a single day is all that strong travelers can accomplish. The whole route is now, and must have been then, one with which hardly any mountain-path that any of us are familiar with can be compared. Twenty miles of such toilsome marching through the defiles and up the declivities of the White Hills of New Hampshire would task the powers of the strongest man to the utmost ; yet here is a whole army doing a feat of twice that magnitude. I am aware that the miraculous prolonging of the day of that battle is one of the special targets of those who hold the supernatural element of the Bible up to ridicule ; but I confess that the power of doing all that Joshua and his men did that day without supernatural help seems just as opposed to all that we know of human possibilities as the prolonging of the day can have been.



## IX.

### THE COMPLETED CONQUEST.

THE kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon being slain and buried together in the cave of Makkedah, Joshua's next step was to visit a portion of those cities, and others which were in more or less close alliance with them, and bring them, and with them all the southern part of Palestine, into subjection. Jerusalem was too strong a position to be taken. Its king had been taken and put to death, but that natural fortress was impregnable to all the skill or power which Joshua could command. Yet that was the only place that could offer resistance. We see the Israelites passing along the western base of the hill-country, taking one place after another, all of them important: first Libnah, its site unknown to us, but doubtless not far from the scene of the recent battle; then Lachish, its site displayed by the mass of ruins and rubbish, bearing, in Lakis, the old name very slightly changed, — a place, then as now, on the regular highway down to Egypt; then Eglon, a little farther eastward, the present Ajlan, on the very slope of the Judæan hills; then they pressed up the pass to Hebron, a point of great natural strength, and then westward to the city of Debir, whose exact site is unknown, but which was near neighbor to Hebron. These places, mere names to us now, with the exception of Hebron, were all that were worthy of taking high

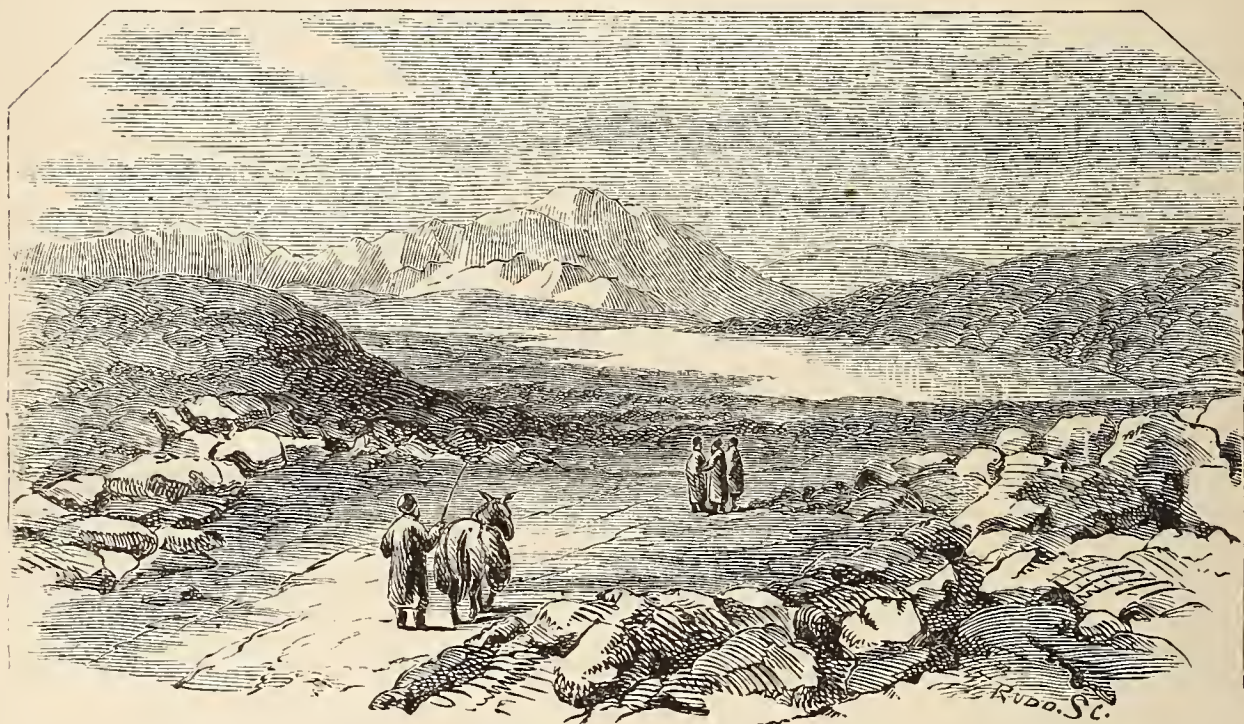
rank then as military positions ; nearly all of them in the Shefelah, or rich plain west of the hill-country, and formidable, it would seem, not so much from their natural position as from the number of people living in those fertile neighborhoods. The hill-country was crowded with towns, it is true ; but although their names are given to us by scores in the fifteenth chapter of Joshua, yet they must have been, taken singly, small, and able to offer little resistance. More than all, there was no thorough alliance in the south. The kings were like feudal chieftains ; each jealously guarded his little hill-city, with its fort and its cluster of houses, but the polity of the country admitted of no complete organization against a mighty and compact body of invaders. A few leading cities, Hebron, Eglon, Lachish, Libnah, and Debir, being taken, the whole of Southern Palestine fell at once, and the concluding story of the conquest is summed up in a few lines in Josh. x. 40, *et seq.* “ So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings : . . . and Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea [in the Arabah, a few miles south-west of the Dead Sea] to Gaza [on the Mediterranean, the modern Ghuzzeh], and all the country of Goshen [a name given, I think, to the rich plains west of the hills, the fertile tract where Lachish, Eglon, and Libnah lay] even to Gibeon.”

Southern Palestine being reduced and brought under the sway of the Israelites, it required one vigorous blow more to bring the north into subjection. The want of any principles of coherence, any organic unity, among the petty chieftains of the south, made those of the north draw together in a league far more comprehensive than that which had allied the

five kings whom Joshua slew at Makkedah. The story of that brief northern campaign is summarily given in the eleventh chapter of Joshua. Just where that city of Hazor was, whose king Jabin was the center of the great alliance, we do not know ; the name was discovered by Burckhardt clinging to a village on the south-eastern slope of Hermon, yet the site is too far north. Were we to judge by natural fitness, no site is so likely as that one occupied by the ancient castle of Hunin, just under the shadow of Hermon, and hard by that noble spring of Banias, which is one of the most striking sources of the Jordan. In the time of the Saviour, the city of Cæsarea Philippi occupied nearly the same ground. There can never have been a time when that place must not have been of commanding importance. Still, Robinson's conjecture that Hazor lay farther south, that it was on an eminence west of the southern part of Lake Huleh, the waters of Merom, appears, in view of all the circumstances at our command, most likely to be the correct one. It may be, too, that a part of the prominence which Hazor takes in the Bible account may be owing to the skill and power of its king Jabin, whose name is specifically given us, while, with one exception, that of the chieftains allied with him is withheld. The names recorded in Joshua eleventh are not all of them identified with places now known ; but enough is made out to show us how broad was that alliance which intended to sweep those Hebrew invaders from the land. It extended to Phœnicia on the northward, to the foot of Carmel on the west, and even to the heights of Dor, south of Carmel ; it comprised the fertile strip on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, the Cinneroth, or Chinnereth, of Joshua's narrative ;



it comprised the now unknown cities of Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, and embraced territory belonging to the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Hivites. It is clear that it was a most formidable alliance,—one which no one but Joshua would have dared to oppose. The place where the great and decisive battle was fought was upon the western level shores of that marshy and stagnant lake known now as El Huleh. Its shores are so flat, partic-



LAKE MEROM, FROM THE SOUTH.

ularly on the north-west, as to allow free play for those dreadful chariots which the Israelites appear to have encountered there for the first time. Yet the tremendous impetuosity of Joshua seems to have given him an immediate advantage. The enemy fled, and were pursued westward as far as to Sidon, then a great and powerful Phœnician city, to a place called Misrephoth-maim, apparently the place where the Leontes torrent breaks through the Lebanon range, and east-

ward as far as to the Valley of Mizpeh, a term obscure indeed, but which may be interpreted as referring to the great Valley of Bekaa, between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, the later Cœle-Syria of literature. This was the second great victory ; and the Scripture again tersely sums up the whole double conquest, that in the south and that in the north. The passage is in Josh. xi. 16, *et seq.* " So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country [the old patriarchal possessions], and all the land of Goshen [the rich plain, as, I infer, west of the southern hill-country], and the valley and the plain and the mountain of Israel [the whole hill-country at the south], and the valley of the same : even from Mt. Halak, that goeth up to Seir [plainly one of the northern mountains of Edom], even unto Baal-gad [a heathen shrine consecrated to Baal] in the valley of Lebanon under Mt. Hermon."

There remained nothing more but to sweep from the earth the surviving remnant of those ancient giants who had once mustered in great force east of the Jordan, but who had also lived in the country around Hebron. We find Joshua unearthing and destroying them at Hebron, at Debir, a city already conquered, lying west or south-west of Hebron, although not identified as yet, and at Anab, a place bearing at the present day its ancient designation, and lying among the hills a few miles south of Hebron. The only members of the Anakim who survived Joshua's assault took refuge in the cities of the Philistines, which were too strong for the Israelites. We shall have to speak of them in another place ; but now it is enough to say that with the exception of Gath they



lay near the Mediterranean coast, west and south-west of the hill-country which Joshua conquered after the battle of Beth-horon.

Looking now at the general aspect of the land after the wonderfully brief and decisive conquest of Joshua, and at the time when it was broken up into the shares allotted to the tribes, we see that in truth it extended from Dan to Beersheba, and from the Mediterranean away eastward indefinitely beyond the Jordan. Dan was at the southern base of Hermon, not far from the scene of that great rout of Jabin and his allied forces. Beersheba we have already noticed, just where the hills of Judæa melt away into the desert. We see that in a certain sense the Israelites were masters of the whole country which they coveted, with the exception of the Philistine territory on the south-west, the rock of Jerusalem, and the territory contiguous to the southern portion of the Lebanon range. The thirteenth chapter of Joshua gives in its opening verses a brief but perfectly intelligible sketch of the territory which the great captain coveted, but which he was not strong enough to win. It would seem from that account that he had expected to conquer the powerful city of Sidon, and to advance even to Aphek, a city to be identified with the modern Afka, on the western slope of Lebanon. The fertile vale of Cœle-Syria was not in his possession, and he could not feel content till he saw his nation master of the whole of that fruitful tract from the heathen shrine of Baal-gad, at the foot of Hermon, northward to where the valley narrows as one approaches the ancient city of Hamath, where the Orontes cleaves its way in its northward course through



a narrow mountain-pass. On the slopes of the Lebanon range lived the Giblites, an unconquered tribe; and all the tract which we know as Phœnicia was eagerly longed for by Joshua. In one word, the plain on the west of Palestine, and the mountain frontier of the north, were not subdued.



TIBERIAS.

## X.

### THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES OF PALESTINE.

THE present is, perhaps, as good an occasion as may present itself for speaking of the various tribes in possession of Palestine at the time of the Israelitish invasion. Those who wish to consult the fullest discussion of this subject must have recourse to the second volume of the translation of Ritter's work. Leaving an exhaustive treatment out of the question, as unsuitable to this series, I should not do right, however, to wholly omit referring to those ancient tribes whose names occur so often in the early books of the Bible. And yet it is but just to say that with all that has been done by Ewald Hitzig and Ritter, the sum total of our knowledge respecting them is very small. Take one tribe, for example, the Girgasites. Of them we know literally nothing. Not a statement has been given us where they lived, and scarcely a hint. We may, with probability, locate them west of the Jordan, but we can go no farther. This is an extreme case; of all the others we have more than the name given us. And yet it is but fair to state that it is impossible to assert that this tribe lived in this place, that tribe in that place, and so on. They were strangely broken up. We find Hivites in Northern and in Central Palestine; we find Hittites in the north, center, and south; we find Amorites east and west of the Jordan, Geshurites in the north and in the south-west. Still, there

are certain tribal designations which have a general application. Some of them have already lain in our path, and been noticed in the previous pages. These form headlands, as it were, and should always be kept in sight. They may be quickly learned and easily retained. We find in Genesis that Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, received Syria for his possession ; and his sons are seen, as early as in Gen. x., occupying a large portion of the country. Some of those names, the Arkite, the Sinite, the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, do not, from the fact that the territories involved lay beyond the domains of the Israelites, come into prominent notice in the Bible ; we know of them, in general, that they lay in Phenicia and in the Lebanon district, but farther than that our biblical investigations do not lead us. Others, like the Amorites, the Jebusites, the Hittites, or descendants of Heth, are among the most familiar names of the Bible.

The land of Canaan, so far as the history of the Israelites is concerned, means Palestine, highland as well as lowland. Strictly, and so far as the western sea-coast is concerned, it means lowland. We find this distinction made even in the Bible, and we know that it was made by the primitive inhabitants of the country. Yet Abraham went to the land of Canaan, meaning the country of Palestine in its whole length and breadth. The Israelites crossed the Jordan and entered Canaan, in a word, Western Palestine, in contradistinction to the lands east of the Jordan. Once or twice we find the word Canaan referring to the plain along the Mediterranean. There is little reason to doubt that the Israelites understood by the term a country little different from that which enters our minds when we read or sing about Canaan. But the



Canaanites are distinguished carefully from Canaan. They are brought into sharp contrast with the Amorites, the dwellers in the mountain-land. Moreover, we are definitely told that the Canaanites lived on the shore of the Mediterranean and on the banks of the Jordan. In one word, they were the Lowlanders of the country, while the Amorites were the Highlanders. Wherever we meet the latter they are a warlike race, living either on the high plateau of Moab east of the Jordan, or on the great central line of hills from the Lebanon to Hebron. We find sporadic traces of them north of Sidon even; we find them in the high Tih plateau of the Sinai Peninsula. The Amorites lived in cities, and seem to be discriminated by their higher civilization from the Perizzites, another race of mountaineers, not descended from Canaan, but the wandering, straggling, tent-loving Bedouins of that day. They have, or seem to have, no local site with which their name is identified. We find them living on Carmel, it is true; yet this appears to be but one of their many homes. These three tribes seem to have been the most formidable of all, although those Girgasites of whom we know so little were among the fiercest foes whom the Israelites encountered. The Hittites come clearly into view as early as the time of Abraham, and of them he buys his grave. So far as we can judge, their chief home continued to be in and around Hebron, where we find them at the first. They were never a powerful tribe; and although they always have a leading place, yet it appears to be simply from the fact that their ancestor Heth was the second son of Canaan; Sidon, the founder of the great city at the north, being the first. Traces of this tribe are found even in David's time, and the name of

Uriah the Hittite will last as long as man shall continue to honor valor, unselfishness, a childlike want of suspicion, and entire fidelity.

Of the other tribes it is hardly necessary to say more than that the Hivites' true home was at the north, under the shadow of Mount Hermon; the Hamathites lived farther north, at the narrowing of the great valley between the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon ranges; the Jebusites held Jerusalem and the mountain district immediately contiguous.

The names of the great tribes external to Palestine proper have been frequently encountered during these articles, and the reader needs but be reminded of them here. The Moabites and the Ammonites we found living east of the Jordan, not strictly opponents of the Israelites, but rather their allies; the invasion of their country by the fierce Amorites causing them to look to the Hebrews for deliverance. The Moabites and Ammonites were descendants of Lot; and hence, when Moses approached their territory, he would not march upon its people as enemies, but contented himself with reducing the Moabites to a subordinate place, and apportioning their valuable pasture-lands to the tribe of Reuben. Yet the territory south of the Arnon was never claimed by the Israelites, and after the conquest of that tract, the "field of Moab," as it is called in the Bible, remained the undisturbed possession of the tribe. They lived, however, in their old city, and there practiced that idolatrous worship of Chemosh which continued, down to the latest day, to call down upon Moab the imprecations of the Jewish prophets. The Ammonites were a wilder and more predatory tribe than the Moabites, and come less conspicuously into notice. It is difficult to point

out the boundaries of their territory, so roving and Bedouin-like were they by nature ; yet it is clear that their dominion was north of Moab and east of Gilead, extending as far as to the Jabbok.

South of the Dead Sea, in the mountain range which runs along the eastern side of the Arabah, and which extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah, or eastern arm of the Red Sea, was the home of an ancient tribe bearing the name of Horites. Sometimes, however, they are mentioned as Seirites, taking the well-known name of the mountain range in whose romantic and wild ravines they lived. Of these Horites or Seirites we get but few glimpses ; they were early dispossessed by the descendants of Esau, the Edomites, who entered the hills on the north-west, and conquered their way southward, till, at last, they held the whole country, and extirpated the ancient possessors. This process of destruction is often witnessed in the earlier books of the Bible. Just as the Philistines destroyed the ancient tribe of Avites or Avim, who lived on the south-west plain of Palestine ; just as the Amorites and Moabites caused the giant races, the Zuzim or Zamzummim, and the Emim, to fade away before them ; just as everywhere we see the Rephaim race, the Anakim, the men of gigantic stature, disappearing, leaving only such men as Goliath to show what the height and size of the earlier inhabitants had been ; so here we see the Horites giving way to the Edomites, the race of Esau. With the latter we have already come in contact, seeing them refuse a passage to the Israelites across their country, by the way of the huge clefts in the mountains (probably Wady Ghaweir), and compelling them to go southward as far as to the Red Sea, and double

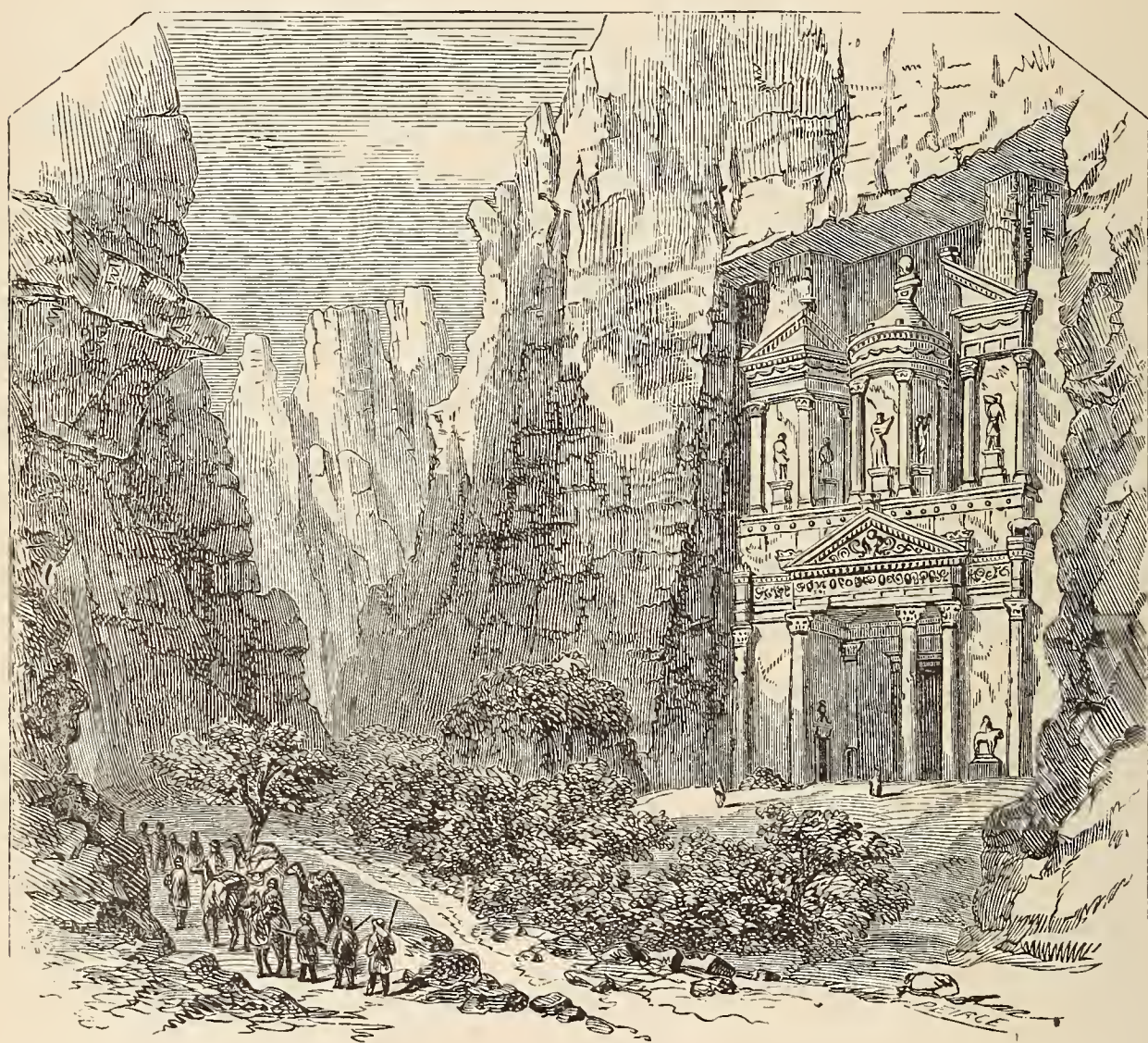


the southernmost extremity of the Seir range. As the Israelites advanced northward along the eastern base of the mountains, we saw the Edomites give up the old, ungracious bearing, come out from their fortresses, and traffic peaceably with their distant kinsmen, manifesting, by this act, that no deep-settled hostility had sprung up between the races, like that which at a later period made the curses poured out upon Edom more bitter and violent than those which fell upon the heads of any other nation.

Edom and the lands contiguous to it are continually meeting us in the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi. Most of them are unknown. Kadesh lay just on the north-west boundary of what was recognized as Edom, and yet we do not know, to-day, just where that Kadesh was ; Bozrah, long the capital of Edom, and unquestionably a place of great splendor in its day, has been identified with the modern Bassera ; Teman, the home of Eliphaz, was near the well-known caravan-station of Maan. The precise location of Uz, the home of Job, is unknown ; so, too, is that of Bildad the Shuhite, Zophar the Naamathite, and Elihu the Buzite : but all of them, Uz, Naamah, Shuh, and Buz, were doubtless within the confines of Edom, or in the desert wastes eastward of the Seir range. That wonderful city, Petra, which lies in the heart of the Edomite mountains, — that city of tombs cut in the heart of the rock, and of houses which remain to-day just as they were left thousands of years ago, because chiseled into the very sides of the lofty cliffs, — that city whose stream of running waters and whose gorgeous coloring have fascinated so many travelers within the present century, and given a tone of romance to the pages of Burck-



hardt, Laborde, Robinson, Stephens, Stanley, indeed of all who have visited the place, — is mentioned very early in the Bible (2 Kings xiv. 7), under the names of Selah and Joktheel, unmistakably the wonder-city of Petra. Edom, too, comprised within its borders, or, at least, under its jurisdic-



TEMPLE IN PETRA (EL KHUSNE).

tion, those parts of Ezion-geber and Elath which lay side by side at the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akabah, and which assumed such marked importance to Israel at the time of Solomon, when his fleets sailed thence to Ophir. It can be seen, at a glance, that Edom was a country whose com-



manding position insured it great power ; and it ought not to surprise us that one of its kings, Hadad, married the sister of an Egyptian queen, and that the children of this marriage were reared in all respects as Egyptian princes. The wars between the Israelites and the Edomites were incessant, the main object in view being the possession of the important harbors of Elath and Ezion-geber, on the Red Sea.

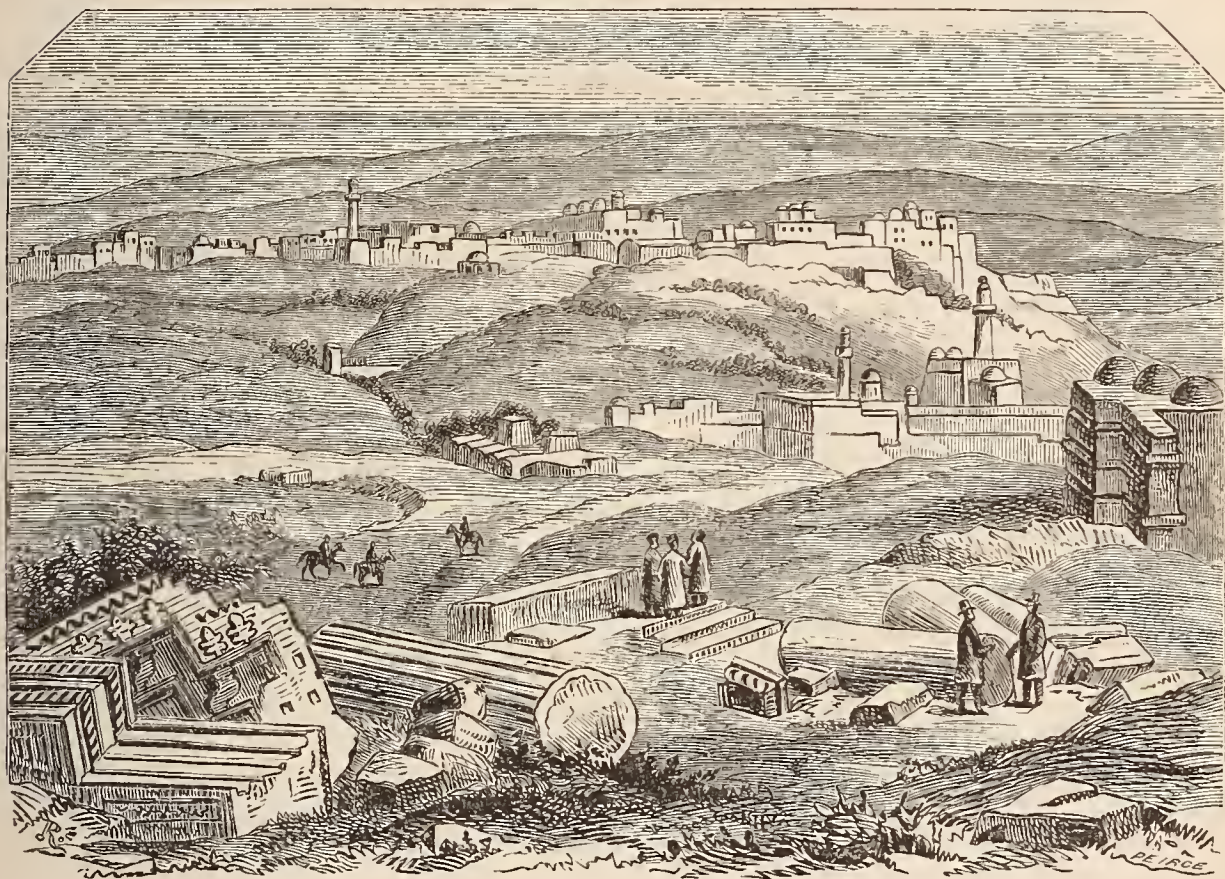
West of the Arabah Valley was the home of those powerful robbers, the Amalekites. They come into view at the time of Chedorlaomer and the other kings of the East. They are seen at a later period contending with Moses for the possession of the one fertile spot in the Sinai Peninsula, the Wady Feiran, at the foot of Serbal, and on the direct route to Sinai. Compelled to retire from that oasis, they appear to have been scattered through the whole northern peninsula ; indeed, we find them at times occupying parts of the southern hill-country of Palestine, and the western plain as far as to Gaza. They appear to have been a savage race, and when Saul spared one of their kings who fell into his hands, it seems to have been accounted ill-judged leniency, and as "evil in the sight of the Lord." They were not put at all upon the same footing with many of the conquered tribes, but "were looked upon as a race of robbers (1 Sam. xv. 2-7) ; and it was thought right, in the time of David and Saul, to exterminate every man, woman, and child of the race." They seem to have been numerous and powerful, a fact which seems to indicate that though their true home was that south country which was once the patriarchal possession, and the whole desert country farther south, yet they drew no small portion of their support from the fertile hills and plains of Southern Palestine.



The Kenites, a tribe strongly allied to the Israelites through the marriage of Moses into it, Jethro being a Kenite, were evidently identical with the Midianites, or, to speak more strictly, were a subordinate tribe of the Midianites. We find them first living in the Sinai Peninsula ; but, following the fortunes of the Israelites, they entered Palestine, and always lived in harmony with the Jews. Their chief cities were in the southern portion of the country, although we find the Rechabites, a branch of the Kenites, far to the north in Samaria. The Kenezites and Kadmonites are, so far as definite knowledge of them is concerned, mere names, and I need not dwell upon them.

Far different from these rough and savage tribes were those powerful and civilized Philistines, who gave their own name to the country we are studying, Palestine being but a corrupted form of the appellation which the Greeks gave to the land of the Philistines. They were, in a measure, a soft and effeminate race, certainly a corrupt and idolatrous one ; but they were immensely in advance of the Israelites in all the arts, in commerce, and in taste. Different from the Phœnicians at the north, on the borders of Asher, the Philistines were a race of strangers ; and the Bible gives us the name of the tribe, the Avim, who occupied the Philistine territory before it passed into the hands of its later possessors. Of the Avites, or Avim, we have, however, nothing but the name. Nor do we know with certainty whence the Philistines came. It would seem to have been from the Island of Crete, although there are some indications that Asia Minor was their former home. But, strangers though they were, they came into possession, after driving out the Avim from

a goodly inheritance, — a tract which has well been called a smaller Egypt, — a land of plenty, filled with cornfields and with gardens fragrant with fruit. The territory extended from the Wady Arish, a few miles south-west of Gaza, and reached north as far as to Ekron, embracing, in addition to these two cities, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ashdod. Of these,



GAZA, MODERN GHUZZEH.

Gaza and Ashkelon were so near the sea as to have ports of their own, while Gath and Ashdod and Ekron were inland. Yet in ancient times commerce was not carried on in ships, and Ashdod [Azotus] was the key to Egypt, commanding, as it did, the great caravan-road which led down into that country. Gaza seems, however, to have been the chief city of the Philistine confederacy, although Ashkelon would ap-



pear to have been the chief religious center. These five powerful cities possessed a tract of boundless fertility. It extended back nearly to the base of the Jewish hills, leaving only a narrow strip of rich soil for Judah to till. Even at the present day the gardens of Jaffa and the tracts of young corn in the "low country" attest that magnificent fertility which made the land of the Philistines the natural granary of the Israelites when their own supplies failed. We are too much inclined to overlook the superiority of the Philistines to the Hebrews in almost every thing,—in the quality of the land they held, and in all the arts of civilization. That Joshua and the Judges and Samuel and Saul were not able to conquer them, tells the story of their great strength. Not till the time of David and Solomon were they brought into subjection; and, indeed, even then, and still more in the later period of Jewish history, we see that the conquest was by no means a final one,—that Philistia still continued to be formidable, and that the Philistine cities, one by one, put forth tremendous efforts to regain their old rank and power. But, in the earlier time, they tolerated the existence of the Jews in the mountain country without yielding to them. Every now and then they would go forth in their strength, defile up the passes which led into the mountains, and harass and overthrow and disarm and spoil the Israelites, sometimes carrying their victorious arms even across the Jordan. Saul was killed by the Philistines on the Gilboa hill, south-east of the Plain of Jezreel.

The knolls or gentle undulations on which the Philistine cities were built were so marked, in comparison with the rest of the country, as to cause the continuance of those cities



down to the present time. Only Gath has passed beyond recognition ; and the recent investigations of Mr. Porter give good reason for supposing that the white and prominent hill ten miles east of the site of Ashdod, or Azotus, was the location of Gath. The other names are seen in Ghuzzeh, Esdud, Akir, and Ascalon. So far as ruins are concerned, those of the last-named are the most imposing in extent ; and, in the opening years of the present century, their magnitude was brought conspicuously into view, in consequence of the search instituted by Lady Hester Stanhope for lost treasure. Esdud and Akir are unimportant villages, while Ghuzzeh, the ancient Gaza, is a large and thriving town. Lying just in the highway of travel to Egypt, and accessible as it is to the Arabs of the Sinai Peninsula, it has long been a favorite resort for traders, and is a place of some wealth. Gath must have lain the most inland of all the Philistine cities, and just on the confines of the territory of Judah. There are two or three sharply-defined eminences which claim the honor of having once been crowned by this powerful citadel ; yet were it not that the old city of Libnah has strong claims to be identified with this white hill of Tell es Safieh, the question would be considered as settled by Prof. Porter's researches. But all these places are of minor importance compared with what they once were. Not that the Philistines were ever what those great sea robbers, the Phœnicians, were ; not that Gaza and Ashkelon were ever what Tyre and Sidon were : yet they were populous and strong, and defied Israel age on age. All that Samson and the other judges could do was to irritate and annoy : not till David came was there any thing like a descent with forces commensurate with the skill of the

Philistines. The latter even went so far as to utterly disarm the Israelites ; and such was the dearth of mechanical arts among the latter, that no one could do any work, however rude, in iron ; and all instruments must be carried down to Philistia to be repaired. Such and so powerful was that race of Lowlanders, a race shamelessly idolatrous, it is true, and worshiping their fish-goddess, Doceto, and knowing nothing of a spiritual faith, but strong in all those elements which gave them material advantage. Only in cunning were they inferior ; in the encounter of wits, the Israelites were always the superior. This trait comes out conspicuously in Samson, but it is salient in all the dealings of the Hebrews with the Philistines.



THORN-TREE.

## XI.

### THE TERRITORY OF THE JEWISH TRIBES.

MORE important to the student of the Bible than a knowledge of the general localities where lived the great tribes with whom the Israelites came into collision in taking possession of the country, or by whom they were environed, is an acquaintance with the partition of the territory by the conqueror. The Book of Joshua is one of the most perfect geographical records ever written, and yet it is, in a measure, unintelligible to us; not from any want of fullness or accuracy, but because many of the smaller places mentioned have faded out of view. That fifteenth chapter of Joshua has appropriately been called the Doomsday Book of Judæa, and its tabulated lists of cities can scarcely be paralleled in any other record. Yet many of the names are lost never to be found again. That Robinson, Smith, Van de Velde, and others, have been able to trace in the modern Arabic names the ancient Hebrew forms, and so make the list of the cities of Judæa measurably intelligible, is a triumphant result of patience and scholarship; and there is now scarcely a group of those "villages" whose location is not known through the identification of one or more of the ancient names in each group. Those Arabic names which are inserted in most of our best maps of the Holy Land confuse and perplex the student at the outset, but they become at last one of the most interest-



ing features. The name looks uncouth to the eye, but to the ear there is the most striking similarity to the ancient Hebrew name. There was a time when the Romans endeavored to impose Greek and Latin names upon the cities of Palestine; but those designations never took root: they appear occasionally in the New Testament in such words as Cæsarea, Decapolis, Antipatris; but after a short time the European name faded away, and a corruption of the old Hebrew names came into general usage again. These names have perpetuated themselves in the mouth of the people of the country down to the present time. The most distinguished travelers of the past hundred years have all made use of the Arabic names in endeavoring to identify ancient sites; even the pedantic Pococke occasionally took advantage of this method, while Seetzen and Burckhardt availed themselves of it repeatedly. It was, however, left for our own countrymen, Robinson and Smith, to reduce this method to a system, and take the Arabic names of the villages and natural features as the most conspicuous mark in identifying places alluded to in the Old Testament. And no one can look at the modern maps and fail to be struck with their signal success. Take a few places as instances: Shiloh is Seilun, Bethel is Beitin, Bethlehem is Beitlahm, Carmel is Kurmul, Emmaus is Amwas, Maon is Maan, Ashdod is Esdud, Gaza is Ghuzzeh, Joppa is Jaffa. Indeed, they might be named by scores. Once in a while a Roman name can be seen in the modern form, such as, for example, Tiberias in Tubarieh; but of such words as Scythopolis, Nicopolis, Eleutheropolis, no trace remains.

Still, from the want of more protracted researches than those of Robinson and Smith, not to speak of the more mod-

ern gleaners in the same field, the greater proportion of the cities mentioned in Joshua, in the various tribal allotments, are not yet identified. In some parts of the country, almost no examination, in fact, has been attempted. The extreme north, for example, and even the tract south of the plain of Esdraelon, have never been examined with any approach to completeness. Even in the neighborhood of Hebron, where Robinson and Smith were extremely successful, Van de Velde states, in his "Travels," that careful investigation would doubtless find many more of those ancient Hebrew names living still in the language of the country; and even he, though a chartographer and no linguist, unearthed, in a few days, some of the primitive designations. We see how this is with ourselves. The name of the town Billerica is a meaningless word now; yet it is but a corruption of the Spanish Villa Rica, rich city, a name to be found on the map of Brazil; Middlesex is Middle Saxony; Essex, East Saxony; Norfolk and Suffolk, North and South Folk. Chester, Colchester, Winchester, Chichester, Worcester, are the Latin *castra*, camp, with names like *collis*, hill, and others, which once gave local force to the name as the site of a Roman camp in England. And so, in fact, in all our names, like Boston (Botolph's Town), Roxbury, Cambridge, Bradford, Haverhill, Concord, Providence, Salem, there lies an ancient significance altogether lost in the mouths of most men, and of interest to others only as the objects of antiquarian curiosity, yet real, and, in many, visible at a glance. Indeed, so marked is this, that the history of the Danish invasion into Great Britain can be read by the names that were left, and the frontier line of that conquest is as plainly marked on the





English map as the line which the tide makes is upon the beach sand.



But leaving this, and the possibilities of future discovery which may be in store for the patient scholars whom the English Exploring Fund is sending into the Holy Land, to subject the whole country to a more detailed and thorough investigation than it has yet known, let us come back to the discussion of the tribal allotments. It must be said at the outset that we do not possess data enabling us to run lines with any approach to that precision which characterizes a modern map; yet the general configuration of each of the divisions is known to us. And, in truth, detail here is not to be ardently desired: what we want most of all is to know what were the natural advantages and disadvantages which were shared by each tribe. In such a study as that which occupied us when we were discussing the crossing of the Jordan, the taking of Ai, and the battle of Beth-horon, it is difficult to know too much; and the more detail we have, the more clearly do we understand the difficulties which lay in the path of the Israelites. But it is doubtful if the exact identification of the boundaries of the tribes would throw any additional light upon the least unsolved problem of Jewish history. We know the lands which each held sufficiently accurately for every purpose, excepting that of the chartographer, who wishes to draw his lines from village to village.

A glance at the map will show that there was great inequality in the size of the divisions allotted to the tribes. One would suppose that Judah, with its great possessions, was much richer in numbers than Dan, with its extremely diminutive territory; but it was not so. Yet, in spite of great inequalities of size, that Providence which has set one thing over against another so equalized their lot that there was little

reason for jealousy. Take Benjamin's portion, for example, just north of Judah, one of the most sterile, rocky, unpromising parts of the whole country, yet rich in its sacred places, having Jerusalem, Gilgal, Bethel, Mizpah, Gibeon, Ramah, Kirjath-jearim, within its borders, all of them bound up with the memories of the most exalted personages or of the most solemn religious rites.

Looking at the southern portion of Palestine, our eye rests first on Judah. It was a large tract, about fifty miles square, bounded on the east by the Dead Sea, and on the west nominally by the Mediterranean, although the Philistines were never dislodged from the fertile strip along the coast. That row of five cities, Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, with their dependent villages, always looked defiantly up to the heights on which the lion of Judah crouched. They were all apportioned by Joshua, but never conquered. The southern boundary of Judah was coincident with that of the country, extending from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, first southward a little distance, and then westward as far as to Wady el Arish, or River of Egypt. Its northern limit was a line passing from the northern extremity of the Dead Sea westward to the Mediterranean, leaving Jerusalem just outside of it on the north. To the tribe of Simeon, eighteen cities, occupying the southern portion of this territory, were given, Beersheba being the most important.

In the general allotment of territory, Simeon had no share : that tribe had to be content with its cities and their villages. The share of Simeon seems to have been one of the most meager of all ; and in an apportionment where inequalities were singularly well shunned, here seems to have been an unequal allotment.



The territories of Judah and Simeon are one ; yet the cities awarded to the latter doubtless were contiguous, and must have occupied, in connection with their dependent villages, most of the territory south of Hebron. Of the characteristics of that country little need be said. There could never have been great fertility in the territory actually possessed by Judah and Simeon ; yet had the former been able to conquer

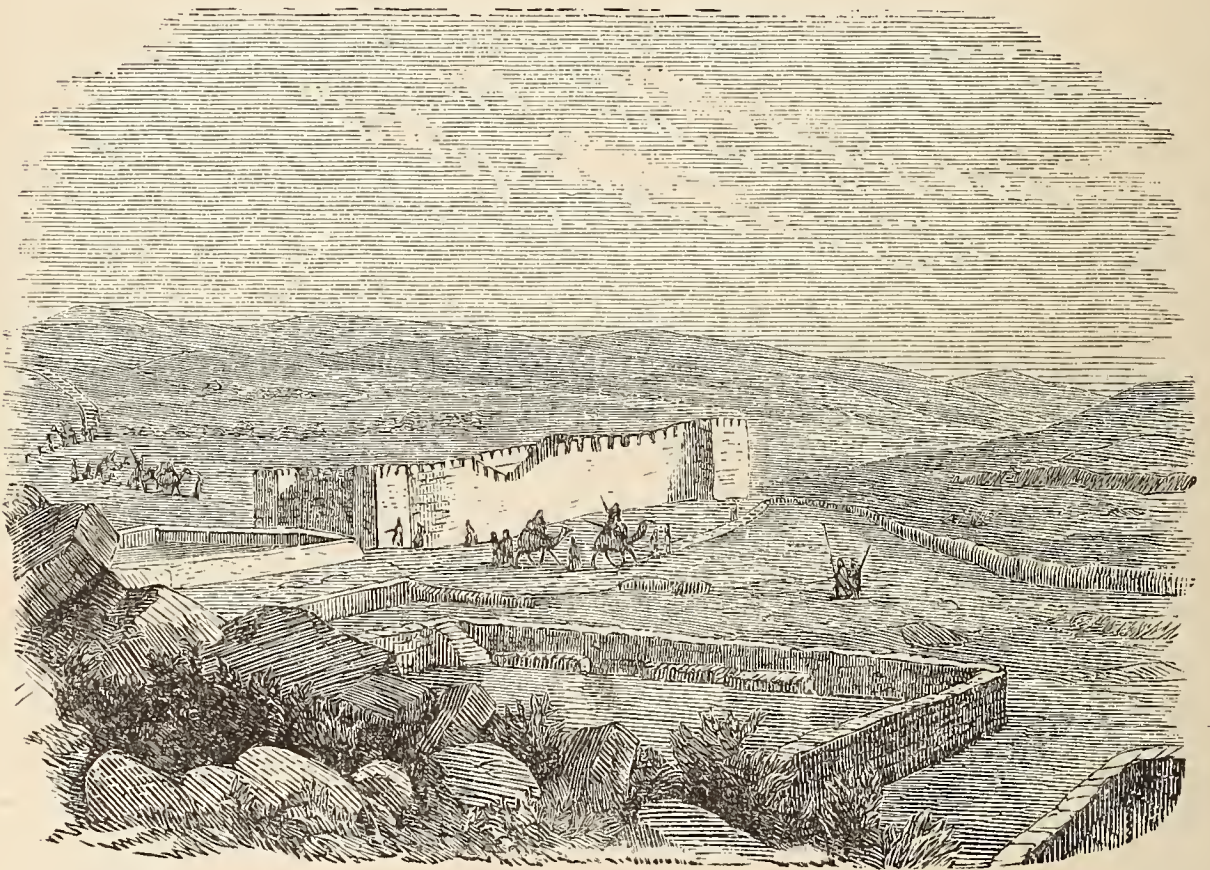


MODERN HEBRON.

Philistia, and possess that rich mountain plain, even the rich lands of Ephraim, Issachar, or Zebulon would scarcely have surpassed it. As it was, Judah possessed a strip of rich cornland, the Shefelah of the Hebrew Scriptures, just at the foot of its hill-country, and between it and the land of the Philistines ; and in the Shefelah it found its greatest wealth. True, there were some places which must always have been noted for their fertility, — that Vale of Hebron, which the spies had found



so attractive, and whence they brought back the heavy grape-clusters; and that rich vale about four miles south of Jerusalem known now as Wady Urtas, the king's gardens which Solomon once loved, and which he brought to so high a degree of perfection. But the most of the country must have always yielded in natural resources to all that lies north of it, excepting the rocky passes of Benjamin. Yet all that could be



SOLOMON'S POOLS, IN WADY URTAS.

done to redeem it was done; and even to the present day the traces of that most laborious terrace-culture which was once practiced on the rocky hillsides of Judah show the consummate patience with which the Israelites labored. The whole country is now a field of rubbish and ruins,—a perfect waste of desolation. Hebron alone bears any marks of prosperity; and even that city is a mere monument of the past, and all that makes it sought now is Abraham's grave.

North of Judah lay the small, barren, and unpromising tract assigned to Benjamin. The border-line from the Jordan westward ran under the very brow of Jerusalem, but on the south side of it, so that the Jebusite stronghold lay within the Benjamite domain. I have already alluded to the richness of this little tract — about twenty-five miles east and west, by twelve north and south — in celebrated cities. The wealth of Benjamin lay in its historical associations, and in the very wildness of its territory. Of all the districts of Palestine, it was the one best adapted to raise up a body of men with war-like natures, — fierce, predatory, wild. The mild traits of their founder entirely disappeared in the descendants ; none were more unlike Benjamin than the Benjamites themselves. The fact that the passes from the southern fords of the Jordan ran up through their territory kept them always ready for battle ; and the fact that all the territory which they could profitably till lay on the Jordan, exposed to constant invasions from the eastern bank, doubtless added to the need of being in constant readiness. Their domain extended from the Jordan to the town of Kirjath-jearim, at the western base of the hill-country, and eight miles from Jerusalem ; while Bethel was the most northern point, as Jerusalem was the most southern.

West of Benjamin lay the small but fertile and exposed territory of Dan. The numbers of this tribe were so great that that circumscribed lowland was not enough for them ; and many of them went far to the north, to the tract just south-west of Hermon ; and there, on a hill still visible, at whose foot the most profuse spring which feeds the Jordan breaks from the earth, they planted that city of Dan which

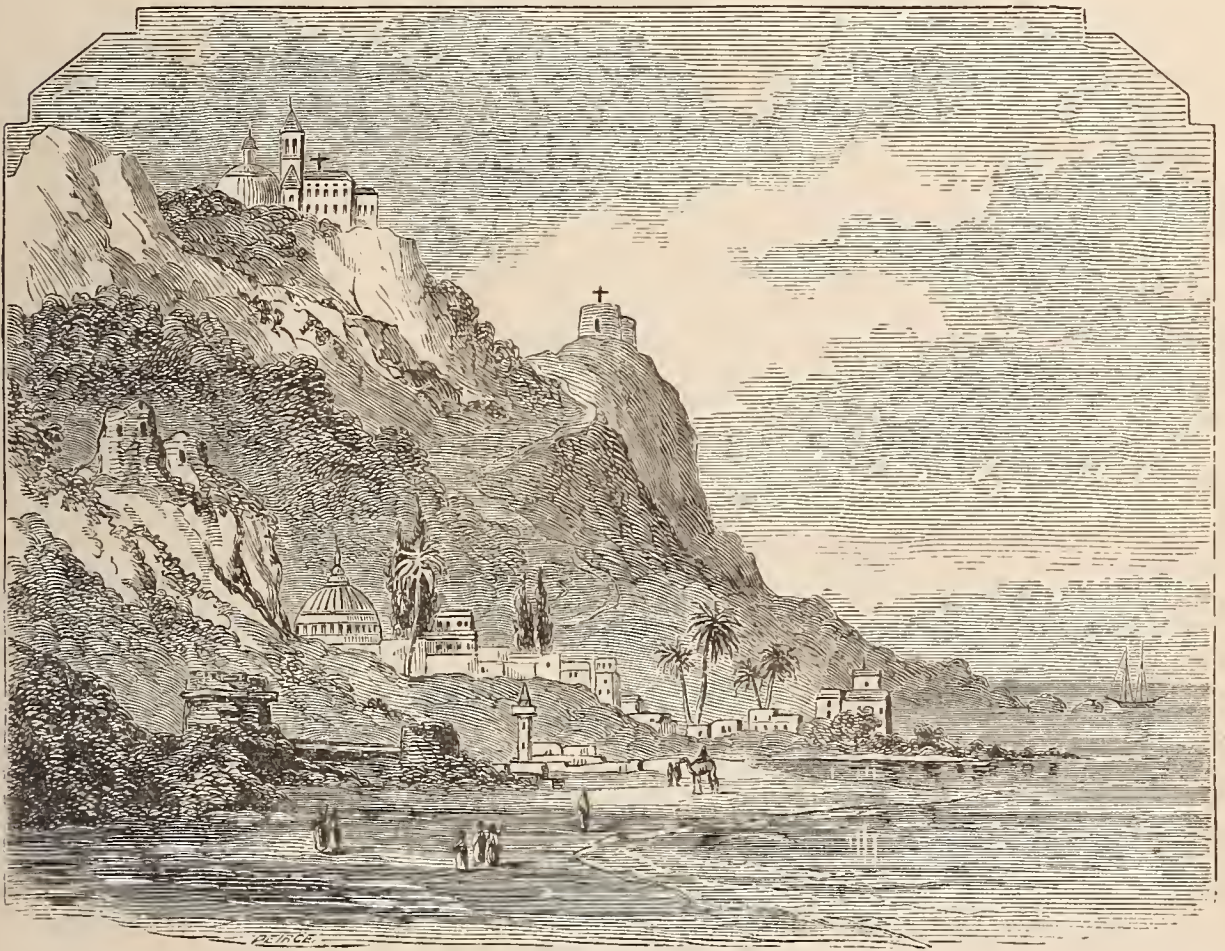


marked the northern limits of actual conquest, and whose name, coupled with that of Beersheba, has been familiar even to the present day. It would seem that no insignificant portion of the tribe removed to this well-watered and secure tract; for it is singularly secure, while the true domain of Dan was the most exposed of all. Lying just between the Philistine territory and that of strong and warlike tribes, it was subjected to the same fate which befell the Shenandoah Valley during our war, — it was the scene of constant strife. Had Joshua been able to conquer the Philistines, Dan would have been rich even with its small possessions; for that whole plain of Sharon shows, even to-day in its sad neglect, the mighty richness of its soil, and what it must have been in that time of its virgin strength.

North of Dan and Benjamin lay the lands of Ephraim, and the western portion of Manasseh, the eastern being a part of the Gilead range, and the rich tract of Bashan beyond the Jordan. It is hard to draw the line which separated Ephraim and Western Manasseh, although the Scripture gives the data. Yet it is clear that the most of that great mountain region, extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, and from Bethel to the Plain of Esdraelon, belonged to Ephraim. Manasseh had possession of the gentle passes which are so numerous and yet so little known, even now, leading down from the mountain-land to the rich plain on the north. The whole of the well-wooded Carmel was assigned to Manasseh. Indeed, all that territory, including Ephraim's possessions as well as Manasseh's, was once covered with a forest growth, of which we now have few remaining traces. Manasseh had no sites which are remarkable, excepting the Carmel hump; but



Ephraim comprised two no less celebrated mountains than Ebal and Gerizim, the plain of Shechem, with its well of Jacob and tomb of Joseph, and the secluded retreat of Shiloh, so long the resting-place of the sacred ark of the covenant. Though the territory of both Ephraim and West-Manasseh was, as a whole, not remarkable for richness, still it



MOUNT CARMEL.

was, and is to the present day, rich in vales and sheltered plains of rare excellence. Of the wood that once graced that whole mountain-country, we have now, as has been remarked, little hint ; but its plains, and more especially that wonderfully beautiful vale of Shechem, retain the same charm which won the eyes of Abraham and Jacob.

The domain of Issachar coincided almost literally with the Plain of Esdraelon, or Jezreel, as it is called in the Old Testament. Rich beyond measure, it yet lay in an extremely exposed situation ; for it extends, in contracted form, to the Jordan itself. There is no natural barrier which prevents the Arabs of the trans-Jordanic region sweeping across the stream in the seasons when it is fordable, and pouring past the ancient city of Bethshean, past the northern extremity of the Gilboa hills, flooding the whole of the rich Plain of Jezreel with their destroying hordes. Manasseh could watch the gentle passes which led through its territory, and prevent these savages from visiting the mountain-land of Ephraim ; but there was nothing to prevent the invasion of Issachar's territory from the east. True, there was the strong tribe of Half-Manasseh just across the Jordan in the Gilead hills ; but they were not in that secure and undisputed possession that would make them like a breakwater to Western Palestine, though doubtless they were a not insufficient protection on that side. Indeed, so well did Eastern Manasseh perform this garrison duty, that Issachar settled into habits of indolence and ease, gave itself up to the tillage of the plain, grew rich and peace-loving. That plain — which is now deserted, given over to its rank growth of weeds and wild grass, that plain over which every traveler grows eloquent as he speaks of its deep black soil and its wonderful capacities — was once studded with cities, and was filled with rich fields of grain. In its center rose the gentle hill on which stood the once proud city of Jezreel ; on the slopes around stood the well-remembered cities of Nain, Endor, and Shunem ; while just at the northern end of the plain rose the graceful, cone-shaped Tabor, the most beautiful of all the mountains of Palestine.



North and north-west of Issachar was the charming hill-country of Zebulon, a rich, delightful tract, embracing a no less celebrated place than Nazareth. Mount Tabor was a prominent feature in the boundary between it and Issachar. North-eastward its limits extended to the Sea of Galilee, and comprised the western shore of that lake as far north, certainly, as Tiberias. Westward, it reached across the narrow end of the great Plain of Esdraelon or Jezreel, and touched the

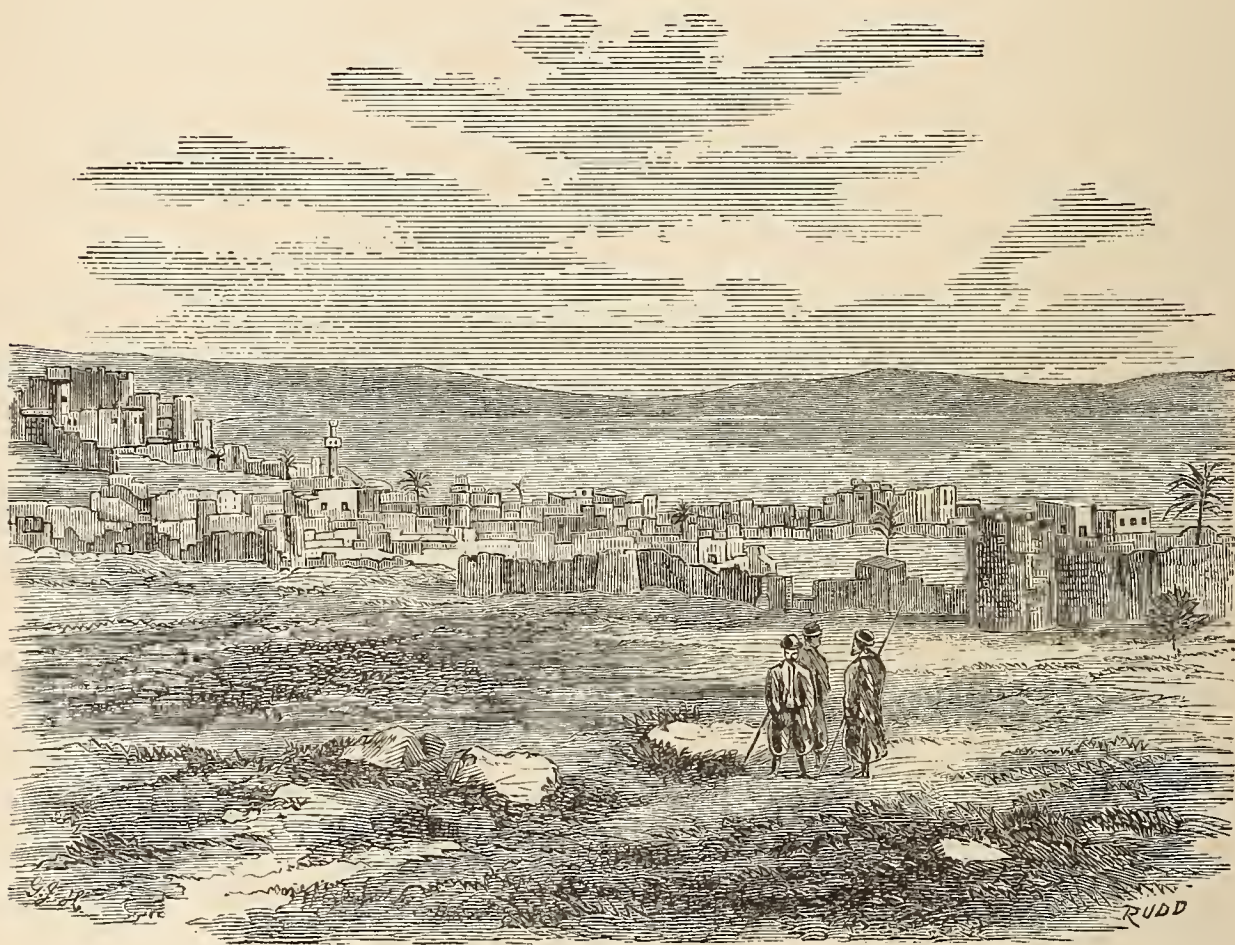


MOUNT TABOR.

northern base of Carmel ; yet it did not reach to the sea, for Asher possessed the maritime strip three or four miles wide. Without any striking features, it was a “goodly” country. The whole of the tract north of the great plain is radically different from that south of it. In Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim even, and West-Manasseh, sterility is the rule and fertility the exception ; but north of the great plain, the hills, no longer rugged and sharp and bold, but gentle and rounded, are covered with vegetation, which grows luxuriant the farther



we advance northward. The tribe of Zebulon inhabited a domain naturally far superior to that allotted to the southern tribes; but its contiguity to the powerful Phœnician cities soon began to influence its fate, and we find that it became, as did Asher and Naphtali, largely corrupted by that profligate civilization; not to the extent of Asher, it is true, but so much so



TIBERIAS AND THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

as to lay the foundation for that cold, unbelieving spirit which later characterized the whole of Galilee, in contradistinction to Judæa. The blessing pronounced by Jacob on Zebulon strongly hints at the future situation of the tribe near the Mediterranean, its commercial as well as agricultural interests, and its contiguity to one of the strongest of the Phœnician cities: —



“Zebulon dwells at the shore of the seas,  
Even he at the shore of ships :  
And his thighs are upon Zidon.”

North-east and north of Zebulon dwelt Naphtali, possessing the fine, rich country west of the northern portion of the Sea of Galilee, the Upper Jordan, and the Lake el Huleh, or

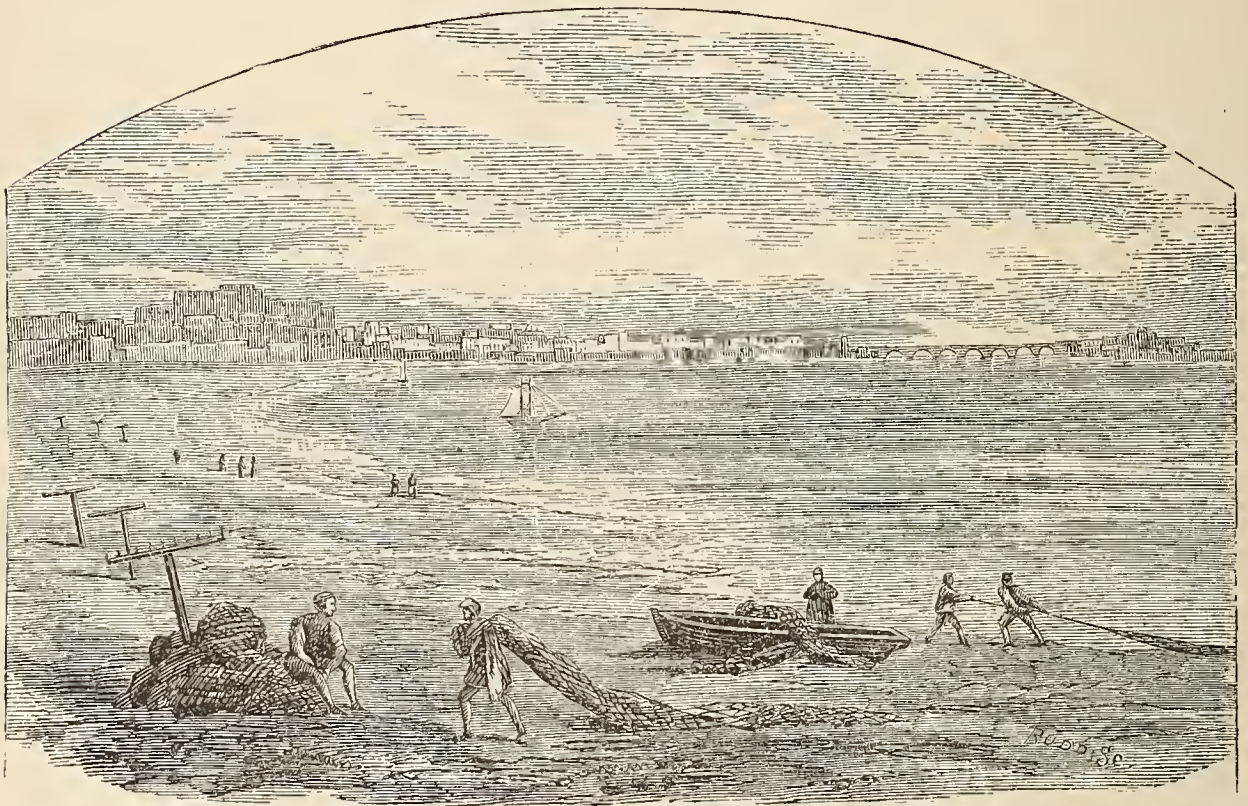


ALL THAT REMAINS OF CAPERNAUM.

Waters of Merom. It reached northward to the very base of Hermon, and took in some of the finest plains and most romantic hills of all Palestine. It comprised Capernaum, the home of the Lord, at the northern extremity of the Sea of Galilee ; Magdala, the birthplace of Mary Magdalene, on the western shore ; Hazor, the mountain-fortress of Jabin, the



great king whom Joshua overthrew at the head of the northern Canaanitish princes. It took in the noble spring of Banias, later Cæsarea Philippi, under Hermon, one of the profuse fountains of the Jordan ; and would have compassed the other spring, still more profuse, a few miles westward, had not refugees from Dan, far at the south, conquered and held it. Naphtali is the most romantic district in all Palestine: Safed, that “ city set on a hill ” to which Jesus referred,



SIDON FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

is in it ; and the rich hills west of Lake Huleh all lie within the confines of this tribe.

But one more northern tribe remains, — Asher. Its territory lay west of Naphtali, and was, in a measure, the only good seaboard which the Israelites possessed. It extended southward, even south of Carmel, as far as to Dor ; took in the maritime edge of the great Plain of Jezreel, and the coast



northward, as far as to the great Phœnician cities. It occupied also a portion of the western slope of Lebanon. Its contiguity to Tyre and Sidon early influenced the fortunes of the tribe. The men of Asher became the menials of the more civilized Phœnicians, enlisted in their service as sailors, boatmen, fishermen, and rapidly relapsed into that idolatry which was always so fascinating to the Israelites. While the other tribes were frequently at war with hostile tribes, Asher was at peace ; for the Phœnicians would not war with their neighbors ; and the arts of peace which they practiced, while shutting off all strife and bloodshed, yet were more insinuating and hurtful than marauding expeditions would have been. With a fine tract, though not equal to many other of the divisions, Asher became sordid, corrupt and time-serving ; it lost not only the old national tone, but the old faith, and of all the tribes became the one most given over to idolatry.

I have, in a previous section, defined the limits of the two and a half tribes which occupied the lands east of the Jordan, — Reuben, Gad, and East-Manasseh. Only one remains, — the tribe of Levi. It is hardly necessary to state that no especial district was allotted to this tribe ; that to it were distributed forty-eight cities scattered throughout the length and breadth of the whole country. Some of these cities were, in the course of time, wrested from the Levites ; and they were compelled to seek a home in those which were not assigned them, and so became, in a certain measure, the vagrants of the land. But the original apportionment was ample, and studiously adapted to the mission of the tribe, and its relation to the Jewish polity.

## XII.

### SCENES IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

WE have now, in a certain sense, concluded our survey of what may be called Palestine ; hereafter we shall only have to review the great general features which we have already examined. We have the outline of our map complete : we have now little more to do than to fill it up with details. Any one who has carefully mastered the ground already gone over, can go on with his Old-Testament reading without much difficulty, feeling all the while that the general configuration of the country and its main features are familiar. We can henceforth pass much more rapidly on, touching lightly on the great events in the Hebrew history, and letting each drop into the niche which it fills. Here and there it may be necessary to linger for the purpose of showing the character of a battle-field, or the journey of some hero ; but we shall find few places which are utterly disconnected from the territory which has already been under discussion. Let me remark, in passing, that a very large number of the smaller places mentioned in the historical books of the Bible have not yet been identified. Many of them never will be ; still, it is not an acquaintance with these which is needed to make the biblical narrative interesting and intelligible ; it is the holding of the great and characteristic features clearly in mind. That we may do this, a certain degree of repetition is necessary ;

names which have already lain in our path must be mentioned again and again, as they occur in new relations, and from this constant reviewing we may hope at length to gain clear insight into the nature of the whole country that witnessed the history of the Chosen People.

Those six cities of refuge, which were appointed to serve as places of safety for those who had accidentally committed manslaughter, all lie, for example, in territories which we have examined, — three being east and three west of the Jordan. Some of them are already known to us by name, — Kedesh, the lofty hill in Naphtali west of the head waters of the Jordan; Shechem, in the fertile plain of Ephraim, between Gerizim and Ebal, the later Sychar and the present Nablüs; and Kirjath-arba, or Hebron, in Judah. Those east of the Jordan are not known to us in their precise locality; still, Golan, in Bashan, was in the territory of East-Manasseh, and could not have been far from the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee; Ramoth in Gilead was not remote from the Jabbok, and appears to have been not far from the Mizpah where Jacob and Laban parted; while Bezer was farther south, somewhere in Moab. It will be seen at a glance that the arrangement was a wise one. The places were all of them important ones, and they were so judiciously placed that every tribe lay contiguous to a city of refuge. And this was of the first consequence. A man having committed manslaughter, although in pure accident, could be instantly put to death by a near relative of the deceased; he must flee with all speed to a city of refuge in order to be safe. The avenger could not follow him there. Asher, Naphtali, Zebulon, and Issachar were all within easy reach of Kedesh; Ephraim, Dan, Ben-



jamin, and West-Manasseh environed Shechem ; Simeon and Judah were close to Hebron ; Reuben had its Bezer, Gad its Ramoth-Gilead, and East-Manasseh its Golan.

We are prepared, too, to understand where Shiloh was, whither the ark was removed from Gilgal, and which long remained the sacred gathering-place of the tribes. The



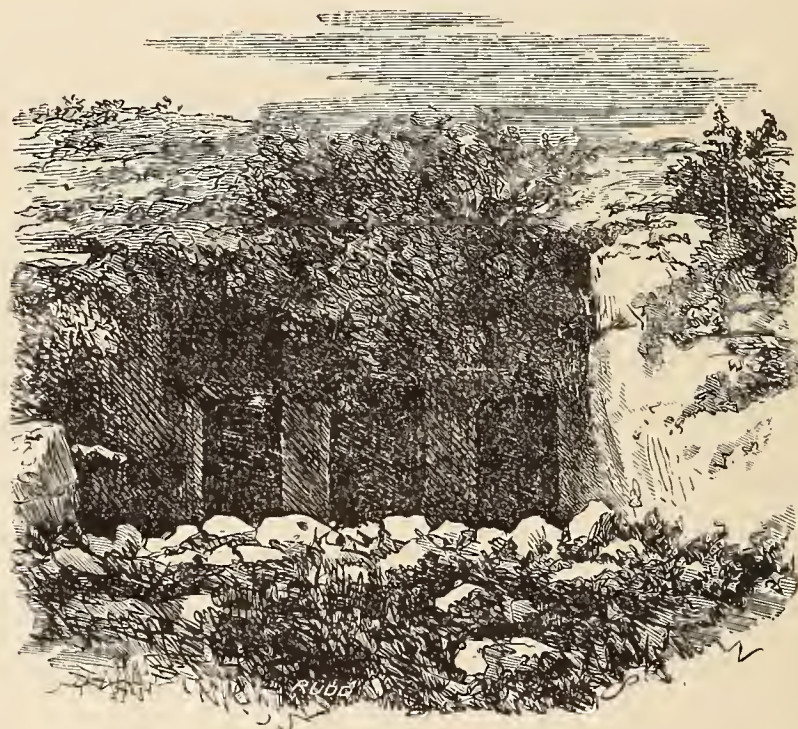
SHILOH (MODERN SEILUN).

description given in Judges xxi. is so full and clear that it can be located at once. Shiloh is there said to be on the north side of Bethel, "on the east of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." The modern traveler does not pass it on the regular route from Jerusalem northward ; he is obliged, a little north of Beitin, or Bethel, to turn to the right for a short distance, in

order to reach the secluded place, where, encircled by hills, the ancient oracles were given at Shiloh. Here, too, Robinson led the way, and was the first to bring this interesting spot to the light of our day. Singularly enough, the ancient name still hovers over the place, and Shiloh is merely Seilun in the mouths of the scanty population there. The ruins found there are of no importance; but the true site of the ancient town is designated by a small hill which rises within this solitary basin. Its silence is most impressive. A little to the north may be seen the ruins of the ancient Lebonah, merely corrupted into Libneh; and the true site of Shiloh is identified beyond all doubt. The place was a remarkably central one, and its seclusion was such as to make it well suited to its oracular character. Besides, it was a place of great natural strength. The narrow valleys which led through the hills that girded Shiloh were easily protected, and it would have required a mighty host to tear the ark away from the Israelites while it remained there. It was only lost when it was taken away by the Jews themselves from its resting-place, and carried down to the battle-field, that its presence might bring strength during the battle with the powerful Philistines. It was captured then, carried down into the low country, and brought that misfortune with it at Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron which made the Philistines more anxious to part with it than they had been to win it. It did not return to Shiloh on the hills again, however. The milch kine, yoked to the cart which contained the ark, and driven by no man, went lowing from Ekron, south-eastward, to Beth-shemesh, the present Ain-shems, in the Valley of the Sorek.



From Beth-shemesh the ark was conveyed to Kirjath-jearim, about ten miles to the north-east, if Robinson's identification of this place with Kuriet el Enab is correct,—a village lying on the regular road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, just where the real ascent from the Philistine country begins. Here, hard by the Philistine country, were the only two places, Beth-shemesh and Kirjath-jearim, where the ark made any prolonged stay, after leaving Shiloh, before it was transferred by David to its new resting-place in Jerusalem.



TRADITIONAL TOMB OF JOSHUA.

So, too, we need only glance at the south-western portion of Ephraim, where the mountain-land begins to soften and decline into the Sharon plain and the level domain of Dan, to discover the general location where the tract assigned to Joshua lay,—Timnath-heres, or Timnath-serah; we have both names. The place is not yet identified beyond a doubt, though Eli Smith discovered ancient tombs in the side of a



hill, which he thought might be the hill Gaash, coupled, in the last chapter of Joshua, with the old hero's burial-place.

The whole of the Book of Judges brings up names which are familiar. Once in a while a geographical fragment of importance has defied our investigation thus far, but there are not many such. We can not tell, for example, where Bezek was, named in the first chapter in connection with the name of its savage monarch, Adoni-bezek, who boasted of having cut off the thumbs and great toes of seventy kings, and compelled them to pick up their meat from under his table. Such a man must have been lord of no small domain; and yet we do not know where Bezek, his capital, was. But Hebron, the home of Caleb, and Debir, its neighbor, the city which Caleb gave to his son-in-law, have already come into notice in connection with Joshua's conquest. Jerusalem, which emerges into view in the first chapter of Judges as overrun by the tribe of Judah, and yet not captured as a permanent possession, but instantly in the hands again of the powerful Jebusites, has often lain in our path as we have followed the wanderings of the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob. Jericho, the "city of palm-trees," whither Eglon, the king of Moab, had removed after crossing the Jordan and gaining that temporary dominion over Israel which was only terminated by his assassination by Ehud near Gilgal, and Hazor, the city of the north, hard by the head waters of the Jordan, though its precise site is unknown, have both become familiar names in the previous articles. We must pause, however, and devote a moment to the great victory gained by Deborah and Barak over the powerful Jabin, king of Hazor.

The second Jabin, like the first, in conjunction with his

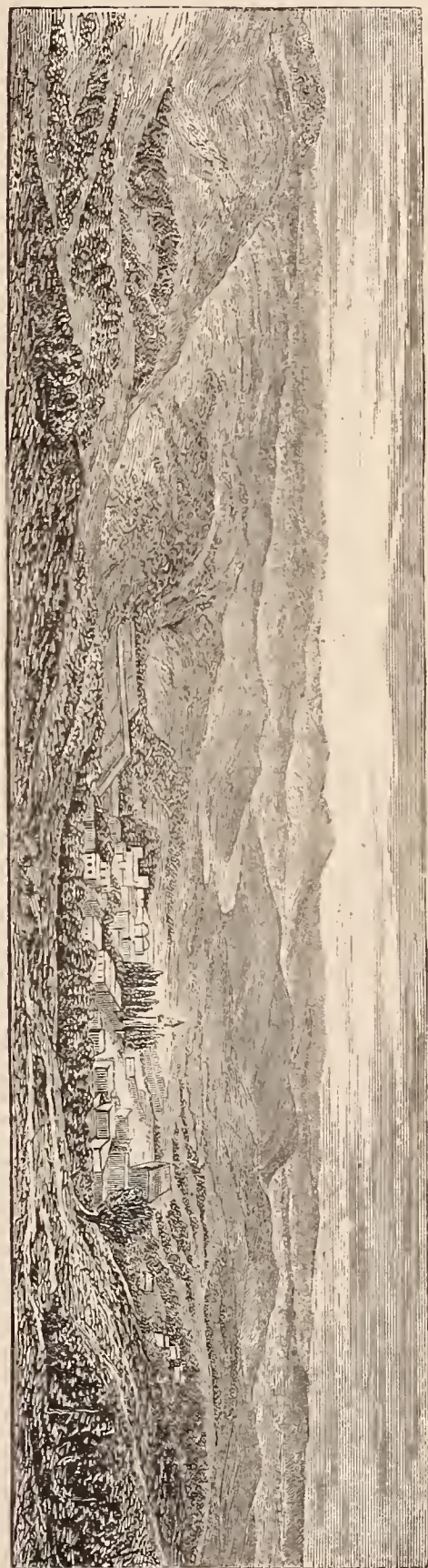
general, Sisera, had united against the Israelites the whole body of chieftains between the Lebanon district and the Plain of Jezreel. The battle in which Joshua achieved his greatest victory was fought on the shores of Lake el Huleh, the Waters of Merom; that in which the second Jabin, and Sisera, his chief, encountered Barak, was on the shores of the brook Kishon, and at the foot of Tabor. This beautiful mountain rises from the northern edge of the great plain. Not far from its base the Kishon begins its course and wanders along its winding way, leisurely reaching the sea at length. Sometimes, however, its waters are swollen with the rains, and then it, like the Jordan, is an angry flood, and rushes tumultuously to the Mediterranean, its waters discolored with the black soil through which it flows. In this Plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, Jabin and Sisera had gathered their army and those nine hundred iron chariots which were so deadly and terrible. Nothing but the fiery enthusiasm of Deborah could have prevailed on the Israelites to venture on an encounter with enemies so strong in numbers and in the means of effecting destruction. But ten thousand men, chiefly from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, took their stand on the sides of Tabor, and waited for the signal. The tactics introduced by Joshua were those which were followed by his successors. Raising the fierce battle-cry, they rushed down the sides of Tabor in such a tremendous onset that Sisera's columns were unable to resist the shock. The Israelites at once were victorious, and pursued the flying Canaanites over the plain as far as Taanach and Megiddo, on the southern margin of the plain, and close by Carmel. The Kishon was filled with the bodies



of the slain, and "swept them away." The victory, every way complete, was crowned by the barbarous assassination of Sisera, as, exhausted by the contest, he lay in the tent of a supposed friend, and slept.

The story of the exploits of Gideon carries us to a territory already familiar to us, and not far distant from that which has just been under review. We are transported to the eastern portion of the Plain of Jezreel, where it is narrowed between Gilboa and Tabor, and begins to slope toward the Jordan Valley. It is true, most of the minor names have been lost, and we can not gather up the details of the victory and the pursuit; but the more striking characteristics can be identified at once. The Midianites had come up from their distant home, east and south of Moab, and had swarmed over the whole southern portion of Palestine, as far to the south-west as Gaza.

NAZARETH AND THE MOUNTAINS SURROUNDING THE PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.



Mount Tabor.

Mount Gilbead.

Little Hermon.

Mount Gilboa.

Hills of Samaria.

Mount Carmel.

The decisive battle was fought,

however, almost within sight of the Jordan. Down the gentle slope east of the Plain of Jezreel, Gideon and his fiery trusty three hundred pursued them, routing them all the way. The Midianites forded the stream at Succoth, the same place where we saw Jacob cross, and plunged up the cleft of the Jabbok, as far as to Penuel, — that scene of the wrestling which we have already witnessed, — a few miles eastward, on the high bank of the defile through which the torrent runs. Still onward, to the unknown sites of Nobah and Jogbehah, the Israelites pursued the discomfited foe ; and there we lose sight of them, while Gideon returns triumphantly home.

The adventures of Abimelech take us to the familiar city of Shechem, the site of the present Nablüs ; to Gerizim, already an often-mentioned name ; and to Thebez, the modern Tubas, a place on the road from Shechem to the Jordan. It was here that Abimelech came to his tragic end, though the most of the events of his ambitious, boastful, and cruel life took place at Shechem.

The strangely tragic story of Jephthah and his daughter transfers us to the eastern bank of the Jordan once more, and takes us over scenes which are already well known to us. The Ammonites had turned fiercely against the Israelites, and more especially against those of the tribes of Gad and East-Manasseh which occupied the high Gilead range. The people of Gilead, alarmed at what was impending, summoned this wild, wandering Jephthah to a convocation at Mizpeh, on the eastern outposts of that range, and, after taking counsel together, sent a message to the warlike Ammonites, demanding their instant surrender. A refusal was sent back, and Jephthah swept down from the mountain-country upon the



Plains of Ammon and the territory which had been taken from Moab, — from Aroer on the Arnon to Minnith, supposed to be a few miles northward, — took twenty cities, and entirely routed the Ammonites. It was to Mizpah and the Gilead mountains that he returned to execute his dreadful vow upon her whose name and fame, as Jephthah's daughter, have been spread as widely as hearts are found to sympathize, or eyes are found to overflow with tears.

The mirthful story of Samson takes us into the west country again, to the low Plain of Dan, north-west of Judah and south-west of Ephraim, and to the land of the Philistines. Timnath, the home of Samson's wife, is identified, beyond much doubt, with the modern village of Tibneh, about two miles west of Aim Shems, in the rolling country which intervenes between the hill-country of Judah and the true Plain of Philistia. It is that district especially which is immortally connected with the memory of those exploits of his which have such a grim humor upon them, and which were yet so irritating, and, in some cases, so really destructive. It is true we see the Philistines pressing him, in one instance, up the passes of Judah, and to the region a little south of Bethlehem, although the rocks Etham and Lehi have not yet been discovered. Here it was, in the domain of Judah, that he broke the cords with which the Philistines essayed to secure him ; here it was, that, with the jaw-bone of an ass, he wrought such destruction : but his later deeds were all in the low country of Philistia. Gaza, the scene of that carrying-away of the gates to the distant hill near Hebron, and of Samson's death, and the Valley of Sorek, the home of Delilah, in the immediate neighborhood of Gaza, were in the Philis-

tines' land ; and even to this day, the memory and traditions of the strong man cling to the modern city which occupies the site, and, with the slightest of changes, adopts the name of the ancient Gaza.

The remaining chapters of the Book of Judges bring no new field into view, with the exception of Gibeah, the scene of that dark tragedy which roused the indignation of the tribes against Benjamin, and caused the thousands from the north and the south to issue forth in array against the men who shared-in that dreadful deed of lust, and suffered it to pass unpunished ; Gibeah, the scene of the wanton and brutal outrage offered to a woman, who, although not herself a wife, was yet protected by her womanhood against the fierce and abandoned passions of the Benjamites, and who died in consequence of the indignities to which she was exposed for a whole night. Gibeah, now Tuleil el Ful, the scene of those mad excesses, lay only about four miles north of Jerusalem, a little south of Ramah, and not far from Gibeon and Mizpah. It was at the latter high that the Israelites gathered, preliminary to the onslaught upon the obdurate Benjamites. Familiar as its name is in the Bible, often as it comes into view after the allusions to the Mizpah east of the Jordan become infrequent, its location is not yet determined with any degree of certainty. Robinson, after a thorough investigation, decided in favor of the lofty ridge north of Jerusalem, known to this day as the Neby Samwil ; others, including Stanley and Bonar, have pronounced in favor of Mizpah's being identified with Scopas, the lofty plain just north of Jerusalem. The weight of evidence seems to be in favor of the Neby Samwil, a very marked spot, whence a



distinct view not only of Jerusalem may be gained, but a noble survey of the entire country. Such a spot as that was well adapted to perpetuate the memory of that eastern Mizpah, where Jacob and Laban parted, and whose memorial pile of stones made it the most sacred spot east of the Jordan. Rock Rimmon, to which the defeated Benjamites fled for protection, lies seven miles north-east of Gibeah of Benjamin, the name still clinging to a white limestone cliff, bare and ragged, and unchanged in its rough outline from what it was when the Benjamites sought its shelter.

The story of Ruth, pathetic and touching as it is, involves little that needs geographical explanation. It revolves around Bethlehem, only drawing its characters from the distant Moab. The last verse of the first chapter gives us all that we need to know in these papers. "So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, which returned out of the country of Moab ; and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley-harvest."



## XIII.

### SCENES IN THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

WITH the First Book of Samuel we come to a broader field of action: the movement of history is more imposing and heroic than in the Book of Judges. Men of a grander type come into view. Yet there are few points which need more than a brief allusion; we have already surveyed the whole of Palestine proper in so much detail, and have encountered the names of so many important places, that we may pass rapidly on.

In a former passage I have alluded to the loss of the ark, anticipating the narrative of 1st Samuel; I have spoken of the fatal effects experienced by the Philistines during the seven months that they retained it, and of its return to Bethshemesh and Kirjath-jearim, two places lying west and north-west of Jerusalem, in the rolling country intervening between the hill-country of Judah and the Philistine Plain.

The three great characters who come into view in 1st Samuel, are Samuel himself, Saul, and David. The careers of Samuel and Saul are portrayed in full, and that of David till his period of persecution ended, and he could take his rightful place before the people. Many of the places mentioned in connection with the lives of these three great leaders are not now to be identified; yet where light is needed to make the moral intent of the narrative clear, we have all the requisite

insight into the details and coloring of the book. We do not know where the birthplace of Samuel was : that Ramah or Ramathaim-zophim, so often mentioned, has thus far defied the search of all investigators ; nor are the most probable inferences of sufficient value to warrant my even alluding to them here. So, too, that wandering course of Saul, in search for his asses, brings us in contact with some familiar names, — the grave of Rachel near Bethlehem, and Bethel ; but beside these, we get no clue to the tract which he wandered over. Yet here are data enough, and they probably present the extreme points, north and south, between which his roving lay. With these in view we can read the obscure names of Shalisha, Shalim, Zuph, Zelzah, and the oak of Tabor (mistranslated Plain of Tabor, and beyond question without relation to the noted mountain of that name), and they need not perplex us, for the purport of the story comes out full and clear, in spite of this geographical indistinctness. So, too, with Samuel's signal victory over the Philistines at the place where he raised the great stone Ebenezer, though the place is unknown, yet as we read that it was between Mizpah and Shen, we know that it must have been not far from the lower opening of one of those defiles which lead from the district north of Jerusalem down to the Philistine Plain. So, too, though we do not know whether that Cave of Adullam, where David found refuge, and hid from the band of Saul's emissaries, lay in the district south-east of Bethlehem, near the Frank Mountain, or near the ancient city of Adullam, in the rolling country south-west of Jerusalem, and at the western base of the hill-country ; yet the story of his persecution, and his painful exile and long hiding from the light, would hardly



gain new vividness were we acquainted with the precise scene of his sufferings. We know enough of that southern



CAVE OF ADULLAM, NEAR BETHLEHEM.\*

tract to follow the general course of David in his repeated flights from Saul, and there stands no insuperable difficulty

\* Rev. A. Bonar, in his *Palestine for the Young*, from which our illustration is taken, says :—

“The Cave of Adullam was not very far from Engedi, and was very near the birthplace of David. Though not quite certainly, yet with very great probability, this cave has, of late years, been iden-



in the way to prevent all the unanswered questions being answered hereafter.

But respecting such momentous battles as that of Saul and Jonathan with the Philistines at Michmash, and of Saul with the same nation on the Plain of Esdraelon, where the Israeli-tish king came to his tragic end ; respecting such border warfare as that of David with the Amalekites of the desert-country south of Palestine ; respecting the help extended by Saul to the men of Gilead, when the latter were threatened with an Ammonite invasion ; respecting the geographical details involved in David's contest with Goliath of Gath, — no future investigation can do more than to fill in the minute details of a picture which is now quite perfect.

tified with one near Bethlehem ; and if this be correct, David, from his earliest years, would know it as a place of resort. When a boy, he and his youthful companions would often scramble up to its entrance and make acquaintance with its general character, little aware of its predestined connection with the future history of some of their party.

"This caverned spot is near a village called Khureitun, a name which has been supposed to be a remnant of the old "Hareth" (1 Sam. xxii. 5), a village with a forest near it, — that very forest helping to make the region the more inaccessible. The cave is reached only by climbing a precipitous ascent, the full height of which is a thousand feet. Half way up you find a slope that leads off to a ledge of rocks ; along this ledge you must walk for half a mile, sometimes creeping under projecting crags, sometimes over them ; at one time stepping over a gap, at another pressing through a fissure, all the while conscious that you have nearly six hundred feet of perpendicular rock below you ! When you reach the entrance at the end of this ledge, you find it guarded by two masses of rock, over which you make your way into the cavern, and are soon lost in an innumerable succession of chambers. Each of these chambers is a sort of hall, in which you might imagine the rocks to be gothic pillars, they are so arranged. The whole of this mountain of rock seems to be honey-combed ; it is all natural excavation. No one has explored more than five hundred yards of it, though the natives believe that the cave reaches as far south as Hebron. Some of the chambers are only a few feet high, others are like the inside of a church. It was here, we believe, that David found a safe retreat from Saul. It was here he was led by the Holy Ghost to write Psalm cxlii., — 'A prayer when he was in the cave.' It was here, too, that he longed for a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, remembering, no doubt, the quiet, unanxious days of boyhood, when he wandered at his will, and slaked his thirst at that well as he returned from rambling over wild, romantic crags. 1 Chron. xi. 15 ; 2 Sam. xxiii. 11."

Look, for a moment, at the appeal made by the men of Jabesh-gilead for help against the approaching Ammonites. Just where Jabesh was, we do not know with absolute certainty ; yet it is identified, with great probability, with a modern village known as Ed Deir, on the south side of a wady known as Jabes, running eastward from the Jordan, near the eastern side of the Plain of Jezreel or Esdraelon, and extending up into the massive Gilead range. We can see the messengers crossing the Jordan at the ford at that place, and dashing across the hill-country of Ephraim and Benjamin, till they reached Gibeah, a few miles north from Jerusalem. We can appreciate the tremendous energy and determination involved in Saul's answer, "To-morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." We know how signally he fulfilled his promise ; and some of us may remember the faithful love of those rescued Gileadites, which wrought itself out in deeds when Saul was no more, and his unburied body, after lying where he fell, on the Gilboa range, between the Jezreel Plain and the Jordan, was taken by the Philistine conquerors and fastened to the walls of Beth-shean, the great city in the pass from Jezreel to the Jordan. You may remember that the people of Jabesh crossed the river, took down the body, carried it to their own city, and buried Saul's ashes among their own dead. Let this loyalty, this unforgetting gratitude, be always set to the credit of the men of Jabesh-gilead.

The pursuit, traced in a former article, of Joshua from Gilgal up the mountain pass to Ai, Gibeon, and Beth-horon, makes it unnecessary to follow in detail the character of the great battle between Saul and Jonathan and the Philistines at Michmash. This formidable people had poured into the very



heart of the Benjamite country, and taken possession of one of the towns at the head of the Wady Suweinit, a gully which is about a mile wide at Michmash, but which narrows to a mere ravine as it runs steeply down to Gilgal and the Jordan Plain. The Israelites were in dismay, and were flying across the Jordan in their terror, while Saul and the main army were at Gilgal. Never had the Philistines been so bold before. The contest had hitherto been an irritating border warfare ; now the foe had struck boldly up the hills, dragging their chariots with them. Yet Jonathan, evidently a valiant and wary young man, was equal to the occasion. Large numbers of the Israelites advanced up the wady, and found themselves lurking-places in the caves and recesses which abound in that wild region. The main army advanced with Saul and Jonathan up the regular road from Gilgal and Jericho to Jerusalem, and so reached Gibeah by this short *détour*. The Philistines were at this time in possession of Michmash, the place where Saul had withdrawn but a few days before. Jonathan had already gained a decisive advantage over the Philistines at Geba, the present Jeba, south of Michmash, a mile distant from it, and at Michmash, the gate of the ravine. Saul remained at Gibeah, three miles farther south, the modern Tuleil el Fûl, where he could have a good view of the Philistine camp at Michmash. He could see the Philistine spoilers issue from the place and go out in three different directions to rob his own people, — northward to Ophrah, the modern Et Tayibeh, on a hill four miles northeast of Bethel, westward to Beth-horon, and eastward down the wady to the Valley of Zeboim, unquestionably the Jordan Plain. Southward they could not go, for there were Saul and

Jonathan with the army. Two great rocks seem to have lain in the wady between Geba and Michmash, their names preserved faithfully, — Bozez and Seneh. Issuing from behind them, Jonathan and his armor-bearer wrought their great deed. Coming upon the Philistines single-handed in the dim light of dawn, as we learn from Josephus, the audacity of the attack paralyzed the Philistines, and Jonathan pressed on with the impulse and irresistibleness of a thousand men, carrying dismay throughout the camp. Saul, watching at Gibeah, perceived the confusion, and knew that a conflict must be raging there. Quickly ascertaining that Jonathan was missing, he pressed on to the scene with his men, and at the same time the Israelites emerged from their hiding-places and rushed against the foe. The Philistines could not use their chariots, their chief reliance, and were utterly discomfited. Onward the Israelites pressed, their enemies flying to Beth-horon, and the same pass which had, in Joshua's time, seen the flight of the Canaanite kings, and the same valley, Ajalon, which had witnessed the moon's impressive halt, now looked upon the downward rushing of those beaten and humiliated Philistines.

Another contest with the Philistines, a short time subsequently, brings a new hero on the field, and invests him with the wondrous charm which always attends great results which issue from apparently trivial sources. Fitly the scene lies not far from Bethlehem, — the birthplace of David. The Philistines were advancing from Gath up into the hill-country, not by the passes they had usually chosen, north-west of Jerusalem, but by the Valley of Elah, the modern Wady Sumt, which runs from the border of the hills west of Bethle-



hem toward Ekron and the sea. The city of Socoh is to be identified, with good degree of certainty, with the modern Suweikeh, on the southern slopes of the wady ; but the site of Azekah is less sure. Yet the general character of the contest is clear. The Philistines were determined to march up into the land of Judah ; and, under the championship of Goliath, that huge descendant of the old race of Anakim, they felt themselves unassailable. In the bed of the torrents, which, after the winter rains, pour down that ravine, David found the pebble which was to be of such effective service. At the bottom of the pass, where the side wadies leave the main gully, is the probable scene of the encounter. The death of Goliath brought immediate panic upon the Philistines. They fled precipitately to Gath and Ekron, the men of Judah pursuing them, and raising their wonted battle-cry ; and a complete rout prevailed.

Of the places which formed the retreats of David during the next few years, till the death of Saul ended the jealousy which sought the young man's life, little need be said. Naioth in Ramah is subject to the same uncertainty which rests upon the site of Ramah. Nob, the city whose priest Ahimelech showed kindness to David, in giving him and the young men with him the shew-bread, and which was so wickedly destroyed by Saul, with all its people, lay on the high plain north of Jerusalem. The Cave of Adullam, as has been indicated previously, is not yet identified ; but that famous grotto, which long served as a sure retreat, either lay south-east of Bethlehem, near the Frank Mountain, or near the city of Adullam, at the western base of the hill-country of Judah. Keilah (identified with the modern Kila), the place rescued by David

from a Philistine attack, lay on the road from Hebron northwest. Ziph, another retreat of David, was about three miles south of Hebron; the hill on which it stood still bearing its ancient name. Carmel, the place of the penurious Nabal's great possessions, was about three miles south of Ziph, and wears its old name, although generally written Kurmul; Maon, the home of Nabal, its name only corrupted into Maan, is close by Carmel; while Ziklag, the city given to David by Achish, the king of Gath, lay in the desert-country south of Judah. Its location has often been guessed, but not yet satisfactorily identified. It lay, unquestionably, in the heart of the Amalekite country. The names of places to which David sent portions of the spoil which he took from this barbarous tribe, and which are given in 1 Sam. xxx. 27-31, have mostly been identified in the domain of Simeon, or the southern portion of Judah.

There remains but one more scene in the 1st book of Samuel before the life of David opens upon its larger and grander stage. That scene, in which, indeed, David does not actually appear, — the battlefield on which Saul met his death, — takes us back to that incessant witness of carnage, the Plain of Jezreel. Not very far from the place where Barak defeated Sisera, the Philistines defeated and slew the first Hebrew king. The Israelites took possession of the highland where the spring is still to be seen that once supplied the city of Jezreel. A little farther to the south-east lies the low, bare ridge known as Gilboa. The Philistines, with their chariots, took their stand in the plain at a place known as Aphek. David, out of favor with Saul, was with the Philistines, and was trusted by the king of Gath, his special friend and pro-



tector ; but the other Philistine princes distrusted the fidelity of the young Hebrew, and, fearing that he would desert during the battle, insisted that he should withdraw from the field. The battle must have been closely contested, but the chariots of the Philistines could do fatal service, and not all of Saul's energy nor fierce determination could save him. The Israelites fled to the hights of Gilboa, whither the chariots could not follow them ; but the panic was too great to be stayed, and the Hebrew king fell by his own hand, rather than be led to Philistia in the disgrace of captivity. Jonathan, the friend of David, fell on the same field. This is hardly the place to say it, yet it may be excused if I express the conviction that nowhere in the whole career of David does his character appear grander than in that lofty dirge in which his tender love, his magnanimity, his loyalty to the dear memories of past days, are mingled with pity, grief, and dismay. 2 Sam. i. 17-27.



## XIV.

### THE EMPIRE OF DAVID AND SOLOMON.

WE have now come to the time when the Hebrew power, in the hands of David and Solomon, attained its largest limits ; when its empire comprised its most extensive domain ; when it was the rival of Egypt and Assyria even in extent, and hardly inferior to them in splendor and opulence. In speaking of the geography of the land which they governed, it will be not at all necessary to dwell specifically upon the many points which come up there again, and which are the mere repetition of what has been made familiar already in our close study of the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. A mere allusion is enough. Moreover, the accounts given in the Books of Kings and Chronicles do not involve geographical detail to any thing like the extent which we encountered in the earlier records : we have, on the contrary, only the summing-up of the results of conquest. David came into possession of an empire so strong, that, with his fine military talents and great ambition and able generals, he had only to put himself at the head of his armies to march to immediate victories. He swept with amazing swiftness from one part of his long frontier to another, and no enemy could withstand him. His first step was to establish his capital at Hebron, where he remained for seven years and a half. He had probably long known the strategic value of the rock held by



the Jebusites, and only partially conquered by Joshua ; but it was reserved for him to complete the taking of Jerusalem, and make it his permanent capital. Notwithstanding the sacred character of Hebron, from its connection with the graves of the patriarchs, it was manifestly too far south to be the capital of the whole monarchy. Besides this, it had no strategic value ; and David, pre-eminently a soldier, determined to preface his work by taking possession of a site,



JERUSALEM, FROM THE WESTERN SLOPE OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

which, in his hands, should be impregnable. It is true, the selection of Jerusalem was a mistake in other respects. It was a strong position, indeed ; but it was altogether too far south to be the center of the tribes. Besides, the establishment of any capital, the centralizing of power at any point, was radically hostile to the Mosaic polity. That polity was essentially democratic : it demanded, indeed, that the place where the ark and the tabernacle should rest should be, in a certain sense, a religious center : but the system of govern-



ment propounded by Moses favored decentralization entirely ; was unequivocally in favor of the development of provinces rather than a capital ; looked to the enlargement of the tribal character, weight, and authority ; favored the building-up of local centers ; and was absolutely pledged to a system diametrically opposed to that which began with David, and which fatally culminated with Solomon. All this is entirely consistent with the fact that Jerusalem was adopted by Jehovah as his Holy City ; for his all-wise plans reached farther than the aggrandizement of the one people Israel, and used for their fulfillment the folly as well as the wisdom of man.

David and Solomon were moved by different motives. The former fell into the error of over-centralization, by feeling the need of a strong, and, indeed, inexpugnable fortress ; the latter, from his servile copying of the Oriental system, which made the monarch and his capital the recipients of all the national wealth, and the country the mere feeder of the metropolis. David, with all his greatness, never rose to the towering eminence of Moses ; never comprehended the vastness of the Mosaic polity ; never knew the worth of the trust committed to him, nor the greatness of his opportunity. Solomon, a wise man in little things, a man of large and detailed knowledge, a man of the world, without steadfast principles, knowing life, indeed, in its worst as well as in its best phases, and ready in giving utterance to maxims of shrewd worldly wisdom, was, in the higher, larger wisdom, more deplorably deficient than even David was. No writer whom I have read, excepting Drew, has fairly grasped the deficiency of Solomon, and showed how radically he failed in understanding his mission, and doing the work which God had de-

signed for his nation. The appointment of a king at all was as true a solecism in the Hebrew polity as the establishment of a capital ; and, in the race of kings, the farther the departure from men who rose, like the Judges, to meet a temporary exigency, and then went back to the people and to the ordinary cares of life when the exigency was past, the more fatal the discrepancy between the Mosaic scheme and the actualized government. And when David formed a capital, and built him a palace of cedar in it ; and when Solomon came and established all the pomp, luxury, voluptuousness, of an Oriental monarch there ; built him palaces which rivaled those of Egypt and Assyria, if they did not surpass them ; established his harem, his gardens, his stables ; appointed his retinues of slaves ; furnished his stables with horses (an unknown animal then in the hill-country) ; dined on vessels of gold, and made silver so common in his capital, that it is distinctly said to have been of no account whatever ; had his chairs of ivory, and his profuse ornaments of peacocks' feathers, and all the jewels of the East, — we can only recognize in him the ordinary type of the Oriental monarch, in comparison with whom a Louis XIV. and an Augustus the Strong are but feeble imitators ; a man like the Pharaohs of Egypt, or Sardanapalus of Assyria. He may have had more wit, more learning, more worldly wisdom, more appreciation of talents, more range of character, more experience of life ; but in that execrable policy, like that which dominates France even at the present day, only far more intense, exhausting, destructive, than even under Louis XIV., of building up a Paris at the expense of the whole country, Solomon was like every brother-monarch of the East. Moses com-



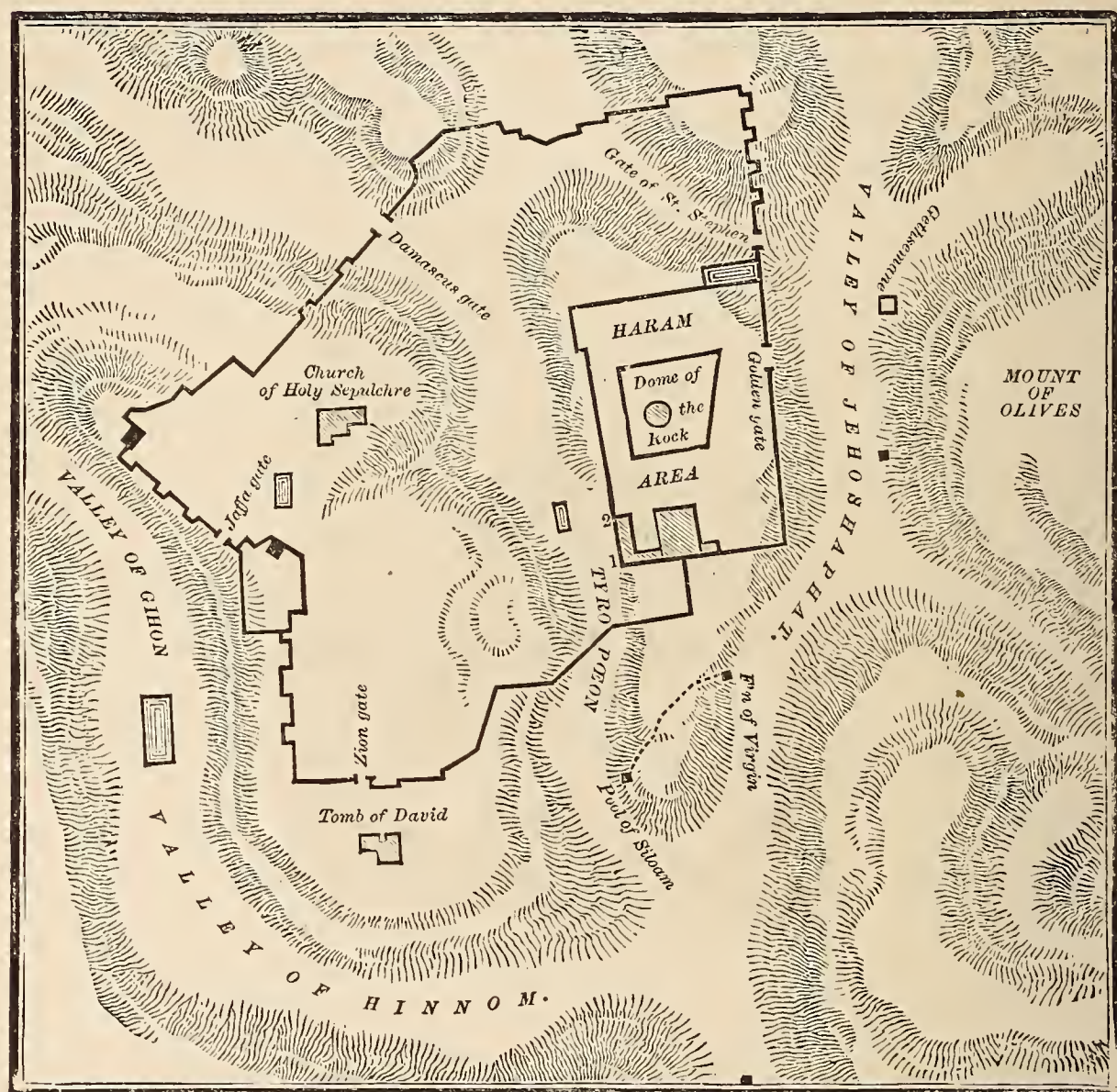
prehended the idea of nationality such as we have in the United States, and, in a measure, in England, to-day. Moses contemplated no less than an even and uniform development of the whole body of his countrymen, of one tribe as much as of another tribe, and of the smallest as well as of the largest city ; but Solomon thought only of his own splendor and glory, and of that of Jerusalem so far as it was tributary to his own magnificence. He ruled over a vast domain, — vast in itself, and vast compared with his two rivals, Egypt and Assyria ; for Israel comprised sixty thousand square miles, Assyria eighty thousand, and Egypt one hundred thousand. The Queen of Sheba, coming up from her rich tract in Southern Arabia, visited a prince far superior to her in extent of domain and princely magnificence, as well as in wit and the darkly-worded wisdom of the East ; and Pharaoh, in giving Solomon his daughter for his wife, allied himself with a prince perhaps his superior in ostentation. But while we get a clear picture of what Jerusalem was during the reign of Solomon, see its gold and silver, and sandal-wood and spices, and ivory and gems, and chariots and horses and palaces, and magnificent temple, that reminds one of the Madeleine of Paris, once dedicated to all the glories of France, we do get hints, brief but not obscure, of the other side ; see the conscriptions, the exhausting of fertile districts, the onerous taxes laid on cities, the arbitrary exactions of every kind, which embittered the land, alienated the people, impoverished the country, and paved the way for a revolution not unlike that which, in France, brought retribution to the Bourbons, and avenged in blood the cruel exactions, and false glory, and greedy, carnal selfishness, of Louis XIV. and XV.

It would seem that David saw that the resistance of the Jebusite fortress would be obstinate ; and hence he promised the greatest prize in his gift to the man who should succeed in successfully storming it. The Jebusites felt entirely secure in their possession of the place ; although the obscure translation of 2 Sam. v. 6-9, and 1 Chron. xi. 5-8, in our version, does not convey a clear meaning. What the Jebusites did answer when David came up against their stronghold was this : "Thou shalt not come in hither : even the blind and the lame shall drive thee back." It would seem that they did actually proceed to the audacious extremity of posting their blind and lame upon the walls, to signify their absolute confidence in their position. I need not remind the reader that Joab mastered it, and was promoted to the chief captaincy of the army.

Jerusalem comprised at that time but a small part of what we understand by the same term. The stronghold of the Jebusites was, unquestionably, the rock-tongue which we know as Mt. Zion, at the south-western portion of the present city. It is surrounded by ravines on three sides ; and, in ancient times, was separated from the low hill on the north, where the so-called Church of the Holy Sepulcher now stands, by a depression, not easily traced at present, so much has it been raised above its former level by the accumulations of rubbish. West of the rock of Zion runs the Valley of Gihon ; and south of it, the Ravine of Hinnom, where once lay Tophet and its flames. East of Zion was the Tyropœon depression, which ran northward for some distance, and which separated the two hills of Zion and Moriah. Precisely what the Millo which David is said to have taken, and to have connected



with his fortifications, was, does not clearly appear ; but it seems to have been a Jebusite stronghold, either at the north-eastern or the north-western corner of Mt. Zion. The City of David, occupying so small a portion even of what is the Jeru-



I. Robinson's Arch. 2. Jews' Wailing-place.

PLAN OF MODERN JERUSALEM, SHOWING ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES.

salem of the present day, much less that of the Herodian epoch, was little more than a well-guarded fortress. It is true, the limits were soon enlarged ; the new house, or palace, of David, if we may apply a word so suggestive of luxury to

what was probably a very ordinary cedar house, built of wood sent by the King of Tyre to Jerusalem, was probably erected outside the City of David, and on the northern hill ; while the plans for building the future temple contemplated the possession of Mt. Moriah, the long rock-tongue which was the counterpart of Zion on the east. On the summit of Moriah lay the round, bare threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.



ROBINSON'S ARCH.

This was purchased by David, and became the altar of the future temple. That stone, rough as in the days of Araunah and David, never touched, except on the margin, by human tool, may be seen to-day under the dome of the Mosque of Omar. That remarkable out-cropping ledge, guarded with its strong iron fence, is what has given the Arabic name to the mosque, — Kubbet el Sakhras, the “Dome of the Rock.” It is but a few years since this exceedingly interesting histori-



cal memorial was displayed to the eyes of Gentile pilgrims ; but now the payment of an English sovereign admits any one to look upon the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and the foundation of the great altar of Solomon's Temple.

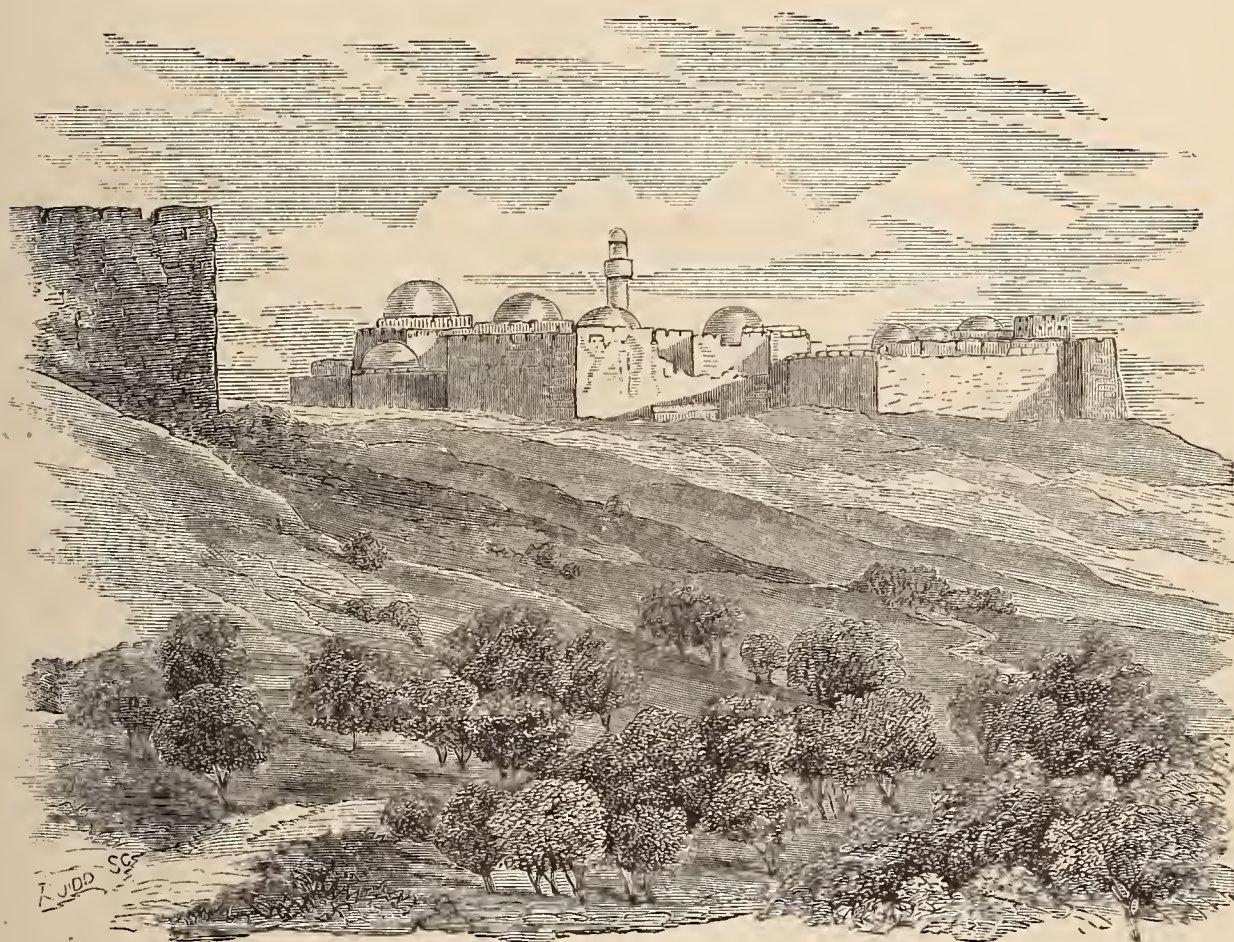


THE DOME OF THE ROCK.

Within the Fortress of Zion, or the City of David, as it was generally called, was the burying-place, for ages, of the Jewish kings ; and beneath those tombs, preserved to the



present day, the ashes of David and his descendants, almost beyond question, lie. There is no reason to suppose that the structures in their present state date back to the time of Solomon ; but there is little doubt that Jewish piety kept the site of kingly sepulture well known, and restored, so fast and so far as was necessary, the ancient monuments.

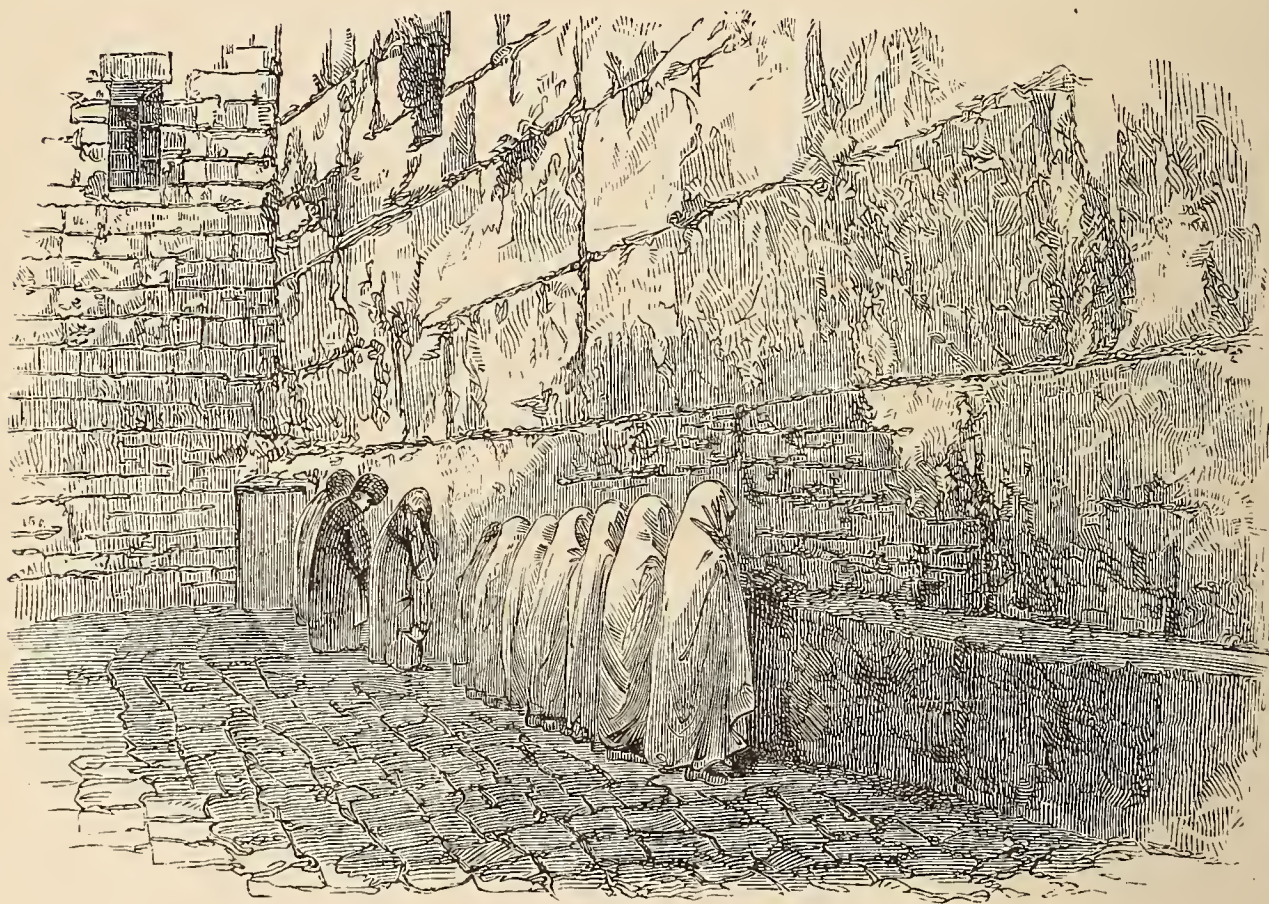


MOSQUE OF THE TOMB OF DAVID, ON MOUNT ZION.

The reign of Solomon entirely changed the aspect of Jerusalem ; and no one would see in it a trace of the Jebusite stronghold. On the Acra, or hill north of Zion, he built his magnificent armory known as the House of the Forest of Lebanon, and his palace ; the latter a structure worthy of the name. On Moriah he completed the building of the temple ; an edifice which, although small (it being not larger than an



ordinary country church), was unquestionably fitted up with Oriental magnificence. South of the city, at Etham, near Bethlehem, he laid out his sumptuous gardens, and built those massive cisterns, to be seen even now, and the wonder of all travelers for their extent. From the profuse springs of that region he appears to have brought an aqueduct to the city, the precursor of the one which was repaired by Pontius



ANCIENT TEMPLE-WALL AT THE JEWS' WAILING-PLACE.

Pilate, and which is in existence to-day. Down under the walls of the city, near the confluence of the Vaileys of Jehoshaphat, east of the city, and of Hinnom, south of it, he laid out the "King's Garden," often alluded to, and whose scanty remains may be traced even now. From the quarries under the northern part of Moriah he took the stones which he required; and those excavations are explored to-day, and

seen just as they were left by the stone-masons of ancient time, the floor itself being littered with the chippings. Of the works wrought by Solomon in Jerusalem, only one authentic memorial exists,—the well-known stones which formed a part of the foundation of the temple, bearing in their beveled edges the Tyrian or Phœnician mark, as do those of Baalbec at the north. The size of those Solomonic remains has been commented upon by all travelers; and it is sufficient to remark here, that they are three and a half feet thick, and attain, in some instances, a length of nearly thirty feet. While availing himself of Phœnician skill, and using Phœnician workmen, there is little doubt that Solomon largely availed himself of Egyptian ideas; and the blending of the elements already existing in the tabernacle with those which are even now to be traced in the Egyptian temples is extremely curious. Yet this is obviously not the place for the discussion of that subject.

But the reigns of David and Solomon had as great an influence in extending the domain of Israël as in enlarging the magnificence of Jerusalem. Solomon was no soldier; and the few campaigns carried on in his reign were merely supplementary to those of David. That era, considered by many the most splendid in the Jewish annals, carried the terror of the Hebrew army north, east, south, and west; even Tyre and Egypt being overawed. In some instances, it is true, we find conquests sweeping over districts, which, like Moab and Ammon, appear to have been reduced to submission before; but David did thoroughly what his predecessors had done but partially. Northward, we find him carrying his victorious army through the kingdom of Hamath in



the Cœle-Syrian Valley, as well as throughout Zobah, Damascus, Maacah, and Ishtob, districts lying north of the territory of East-Manasseh, and extending eastward as far as the Euphrates. On the east, we see David reducing the Moabites to absolute subjection, and treating the Ammonites with a degree of cruelty which indicates his determination to utterly prevent the future outbreaking of that wild, rapacious spirit which made them such destructive and dreaded neighbors. The reader will recall his complete overthrow of Rabbath, the Ammon capital, whose site is now identified with some massive Roman ruins, marking the place where Philadelphia stood at the time of the Cæsars' dominion in Palestine. In accordance with what has already been alluded to in these pages, the Græco-Roman name "Philadelphia" has disappeared, and the ancient word "Amman" clings to the site. The huge Roman citadel stands near the brook which supplied the wants of the people with water; and here on this low ground was the "city of the waters" which Joab first took. The citadel stood on higher ground; but, the lower city having fallen, the citadel could hold out but a short time. Joab, that curiously ambitious, sullen, dark, cruel character, is here seen doing a magnanimous act. He sent to Jerusalem to summon David to the spot, that the king might have the glory of completing the work which Joab's skill and daring had really done, even when the citadel was untouched. David hurried away from Bathsheba's embraces, that he might win, with no hazard and no pains, this easy glory. It was in this same war with the Ammonites that David caused Uriah to be put in the front ranks and be slain.

Master of all the territory to the Euphrates, we find Solomon building a city in the desert, on the highway to the river, — the Tadmor of that time, and the Palmyra of a later day, whose Roman ruins still attract the eye of those few travelers who dare to encounter the perils of that Arab-haunted wilderness. Farther east, and on the Euphrates, he builds another city, Tiphseh, better known to us by its later Greek name, Thapsacus, and intended to serve as an *entrepôt* for his trade with the remote East. Other cities are mentioned as established in that region; but of their locations we now know nothing.

Southward, David advanced into the Edomite territory, and subjected that also, carrying his victorious army as far as to the Gulf of Akabah. Petra, with its secluded rock-avenues, and houses cut into the towering cliffs, fell into the hands of David. Elah and Ezion-geber, on the Gulf of Akabah, grew up into the maritime *dépôts* for Solomon's commerce. Their situations have been indicated in a former section as at the very head of the gulf. The conquest of Edom, with its mountain-fastnesses, was one of David's greatest military triumphs. The nature of the country is such as to make it inaccessible; and a hundred men within its ravines could easily repel a thousand. But, wherever we see David in the character of a warrior, we discover that he was unequivocally great. His campaign at the north with the kings of Hamath and Zobah must have been a closely-contested one; that with Edom could have been no less so. An easier task was it to put down the savage Amalekites of Paran; but to overcome the Philistines required all his skill, vigor, spirit, and resolution. Repeatedly they advanced into



the hill-country, — sometimes to the very Plain of Rephaim, just south of Jerusalem ; but they could not stand before the strategy, power, and determination of David, and were in his reign, for the first time, fairly brought into subjection.

The marriage of Solomon with the daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh, hostile and fatal as that step was to the Mosaic polity, shows how formidable an ally was recognized in the Hebrew king. The eager offers of assistance from Hiram of Tyre show how promptly that worldly-wise prince assented to what he could not prevent, and confessed the power of Israel ; while the gift of twenty insignificant Galilean cities shows how disdainfully Solomon looked down upon his Phœnician ally, and how unnecessary he thought it to buy his favor. The Hebrew king now controlled the very outlet of the Tyrian trade eastward. The road from Tyre to Damascus ran over the hills of Naphtali, and under the shadow of Hermon, passing the springs which form the fountain-head of the Jordan. This road was now under the absolute control of David and Solomon. It was an easy purchase of good-will to send the cedars of Lebanon, and skillful artificers in brass and gold, from Tyre to Jerusalem, to help the two kings in their sumptuous designs.

In the reigns of David and Solomon, then, we see the greatest extent of the Hebrew Empire. It comprised all Syria, with the exception of the Phœnician cities on the seaboard ; and these were in a measure overawed by it. It extended north of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, embraced the fertile valley between them, and reached north-eastward and eastward to the Euphrates. Southward it extended to the Red Sea. Westward it touched Egypt, rec-

ognized in it simply an equal power, and possessed the Mediterranean as its natural frontier. But, great as it was, it was not strong. The conscription introduced by David for the purpose of supplying his army was fatally offensive to his subjects, and the measures employed by Solomon for building up his capital were no less so. The latter king never saw, it would appear, that if he was to desert the Mosaic polity, and centralize power, and establish a despotism, the city which should be chosen ought not to lie where Jerusalem did. Unquestionably for such a scheme, false and ruinous as it must prove to the hopes of that great man who died on Pisgah, the only place for a capital was in the fertile lands of Ephraim or Issachar, either on the Plain of Shechem, or under the shadow of Tabor. But Solomon, with all his science, cunning, thrift, and worldly wisdom, did not see this : he failed not only to grasp the immense reach of Moses' thought, but he even showed the strangest want of breadth in shutting up his magnificence in this southern city of Jerusalem, away from the natural heart of the country, and the obvious object of hatred and envy. The rebellion of the northern tribes was in great part the protest against this most unwise step : the decay of the old Mosaic spirit was the immediate result of the false polity of Solomon's entire career. The wide extension of the Hebrew commerce merely enriched the capital. It gave wealth to no village ; it repeated not even the splendors of Jerusalem on smaller scale in any cities save the few where Solomon's grandees lived. Those twelve princes to whom was appointed the task of rapaciously seizing the lion's share of the produce of the country, and whose centers of operations were the most fruitful districts, may indeed have estab-



lished minor courts, and copied, to a certain extent, the magnificence of Jerusalem; but their task was the perfectly intelligible one of collecting all that was valuable and useful, that the immense retinue of servants, wives, and concubines might be sumptuously maintained, and that the magnificence of the voluptuous and greedy Solomon might be suitably ministered unto.

The three important points in the foreign world which are brought into view during the reign of Solomon must not be passed over without a word. Sheba, or Sabæa, was a large and fertile tract in the southern portion of Arabia, and one of the most opulent regions in the world. It is noticeable that the queen, in making her visit to Solomon, advances by land, and not by water; for, with all her wealth, she had not Tyrians for her allies, and could not use their ships as Solomon could. It would appear that the fertile province of Arabia Felix, so rich in tropical productions, was more opulent than even Mesopotamia, or Egypt; and the visit of the princess was a tribute to the magnificence and reputation of Solomon, which that of a Pharaoh would scarcely have surpassed.

The limits of her domain it would be difficult to define; but they coincided unquestionably with the tract which we now know as Yemen, whose wonderful productiveness is celebrated by all Arabian travelers.

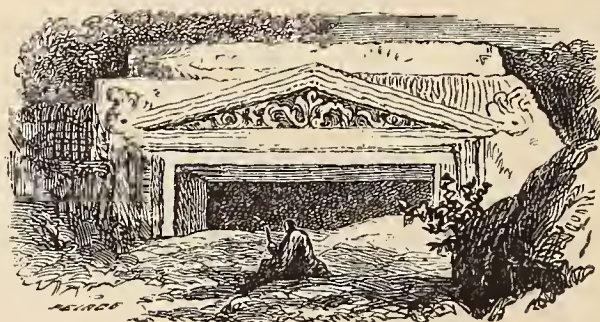
Of Tarshish and Ophir it would be easy to speak at almost any length; yet it is not needful. Those who wish to enter upon a detailed examination of the locations assigned to it, and the arguments connected therewith, will find all they seek in Ritter's volumes, as well as in Mr. Twisleton's no less learned article in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." It

appears to me quite certain that the word "Ophir" is not to be applied to any single point; that it was a term indicative of those distant regions where Solomon traded for gold, sandal-wood, apes, and peacocks; that it may have taken in the east coast of Africa and the Southern coast of Arabia; but that it unquestionably comprised the western coast of India, from the mouth of the Indus, southward as far at least as to Goa. The Indian origin of the words used in describing some of the articles imported is unquestionable; and sandal-wood and peacocks could not have been brought from any other point. Indeed, taken as a whole, the articles imported by Solomon would be recognized at once by any competent judge as Indian; and the prolonged controversy respecting the site of Ophir is narrowed down to this, that although it is not improbable that the name may have been so broad and generic in its character as to bear application to the other coasts alluded to above, yet it is unquestionable that the western coast of India is to be kept pre-eminently in view in connection with Ophir.

Of Tarshish it is less easy to speak. It does not appear possible that Solomon could have sent ships westward from Joppa to Tartessus, on the southern coast of Spain: that would have been interfering too seriously with the domain of the Phœnicians, who controlled the commerce of the Mediterranean. Ships of Tarshish are said to have been in use to go to Ophir. In one case (2 Chron ix, 21), we are told that Solomon's "ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. • Every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory and apes and peacocks." The word "Ophir" does not occur here: but the word "Tarshish,"



it is thought by some, has crept in, in the first clause, by an error ; for in the corresponding account in 1 Kings. x. 11, the account which was followed in preparing the subsequent chronicles, the word "Ophir" is found. The whole matter, so far as the ablest scholars have been able to sum it up, is as follows : That there is one, and but one, Tarshish alluded to in the Bible, — the one on the Spanish coast to which Jonah is represented as flying ; but that the term "ships of Tarshish" came into general use to indicate a class of vessels suitable for long voyages. Whenever, then, we meet in the account of Solomon's expeditions, the term "ships of Tarshish," it is thought to mean that larger class of ships which would unquestionably be necessary for a three-years' journey to the distant Ophir. These "Tarshish ships" were built for him by the skilled Tyrian workmen at Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akabah : they were manned with Tyrian sailors, hired and paid by Solomon. This commerce did not interfere with the Phœnician interests ; they were, of course mostly confined, so far as they were maritime, to the Mediterranean : and Hiram of Tyre gladly permitted his subjects to take Solomon's gold in exchange for their services.



## XV.

### THE TWO KINGDOMS.

It will be impracticable to follow, step by step, the events which mark the subsequent histories of Judah and Israel. Happily, they do not take us over fields which are absolutely new ; indeed, there is scarcely an incident, which is mentioned in the subsequent history of the tribes, whose geographical character has not been seen in some of the transactions which we have already studied. A rapid survey of this part of the subject is entirely practicable, without abandonment of the method which has thus far been our guide.

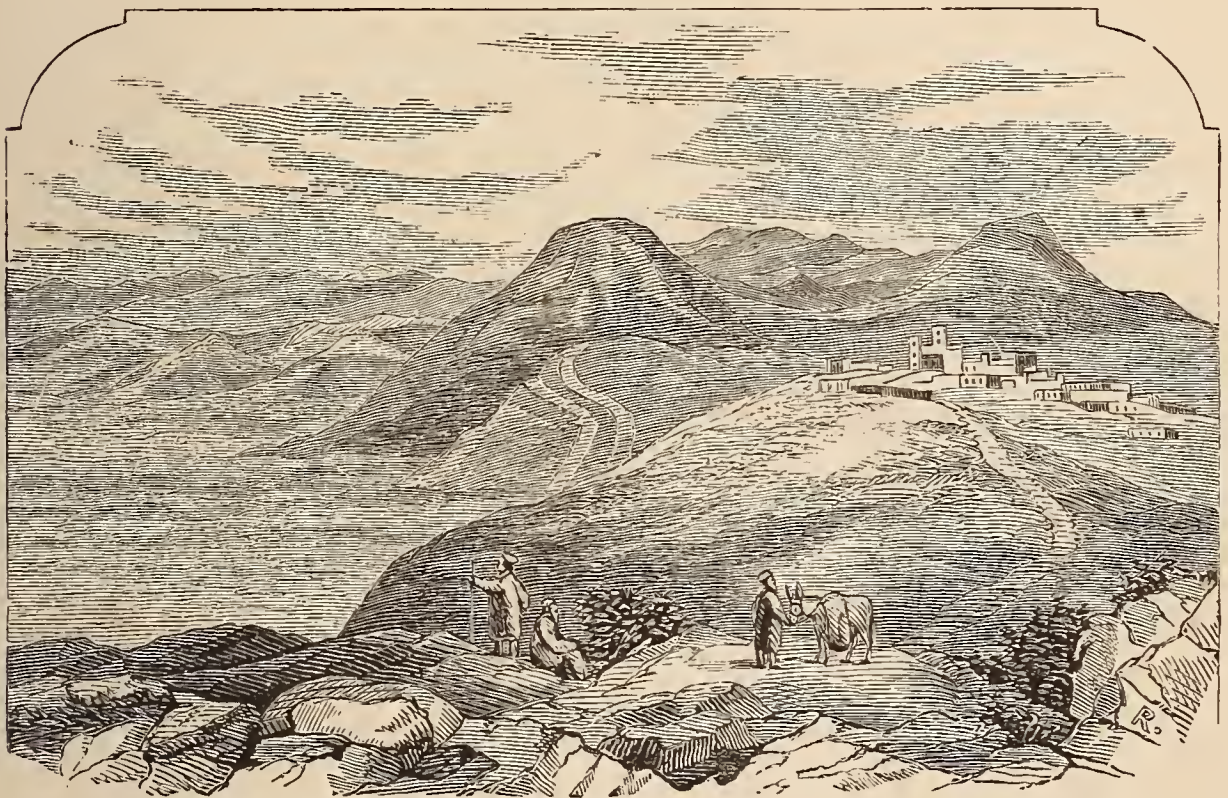
We have thus far traced the line of Jewish history from its beginnings in Mesopotamia, at Abraham's home, along its tenuous upper course ; we have seen it widen and widen, at length become a full and swollen stream ; and at its last stage under David and Solomon, we have beheld it attain its maximum dimensions, and become, in territory at least, one of the great empires of the earth. There are no points to be discussed *beyond* the regions which have come into view in our previous studies ; and we can now leave the stream of history, and strike here or there, according as the necessity may appear to call.

Any one who has carefully followed what has been said respecting the great mistakes of Solomon's policy, is prepared to see that the division of Palestine proper into two kingdoms



was natural and inevitable. The one grand mistake which hurried the catastrophe was the selection of the fortress of Jerusalem, far to the south, in a desolate and forbidding district, as the capital of the whole land. It was a task requiring the utmost patience and genius to bind the Jewish people together, to cause the sentiment of nationality to take deeper and deeper root, and to build up the most remote dependency with as assiduous care as the most populous city received. Moses understood this ; but men who are thought by some to have been as wise as Moses, David and Solomon, did not. The tendencies of the people at the southern part of Palestine were toward self-protection, patriotism, a limitation of boundaries, a simple shepherd-life ; but at the north, where the communications with other great nations were ready and direct, a centrifugal impulse was quickly imparted to the people, and the necessity of coherence became less apparent. The purity of Hebrew worship was much more closely observed in the south than in the north. The Jews of Asher and Zebulun were easily persuaded to become the menials of Tyrian masters, and to do the common service of the Tyrian cities. The men of Naphtali were not so far removed from Damascus and the other great cities of Syria as not to feel a measure of the subtle influences of those voluptuous centers. Ephraim, the great tribe farther south, was proud and willful, and was most unwilling to be second to the no less proud and willful Judah. It did not need words as sharp and scornful as those of Rehoboam to make it clear that the tribes of the north would not pay allegiance to Judah and Benjamin. Matters were in a perilous way when that imperious son of Solomon came to the throne, and

uttered those insulting words, so unlike any which the good Lincoln uttered when the revolt of the South seemed imminent, — “And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke : my father has chastised you with whips ; but I will chastise you with scorpions.” After this the dissolution was inevitable : it could not even be postponed. The whole catastrophe was consummated in a



JEZREEL.

day : Judah, with its dependent tribes of Simeon on the south and Benjamin on the north, became one nation ; and the northern tribes became another.

The natural capital of the kingdom of Israel was Shechem. Its ancient associations, bound as it was to the memories of Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, made it a hallowed spot : it was lovely as a paradise. It was in the domain of the haughty and willful Ephraim. At a subsequent period, Tirzah, a



place noted for its beauty, and lying, it is supposed, among the hills at the modern Telluzeh, twelve miles north of Shechem or Nablus ; Samaria, the noted city, whose ruins are still so full of a mournful grandeur ; and Jezreel, the modern Zerin, situated on a bluff in the eastern part of the Plain of Esdraelon, — were the residences of the northern kings.

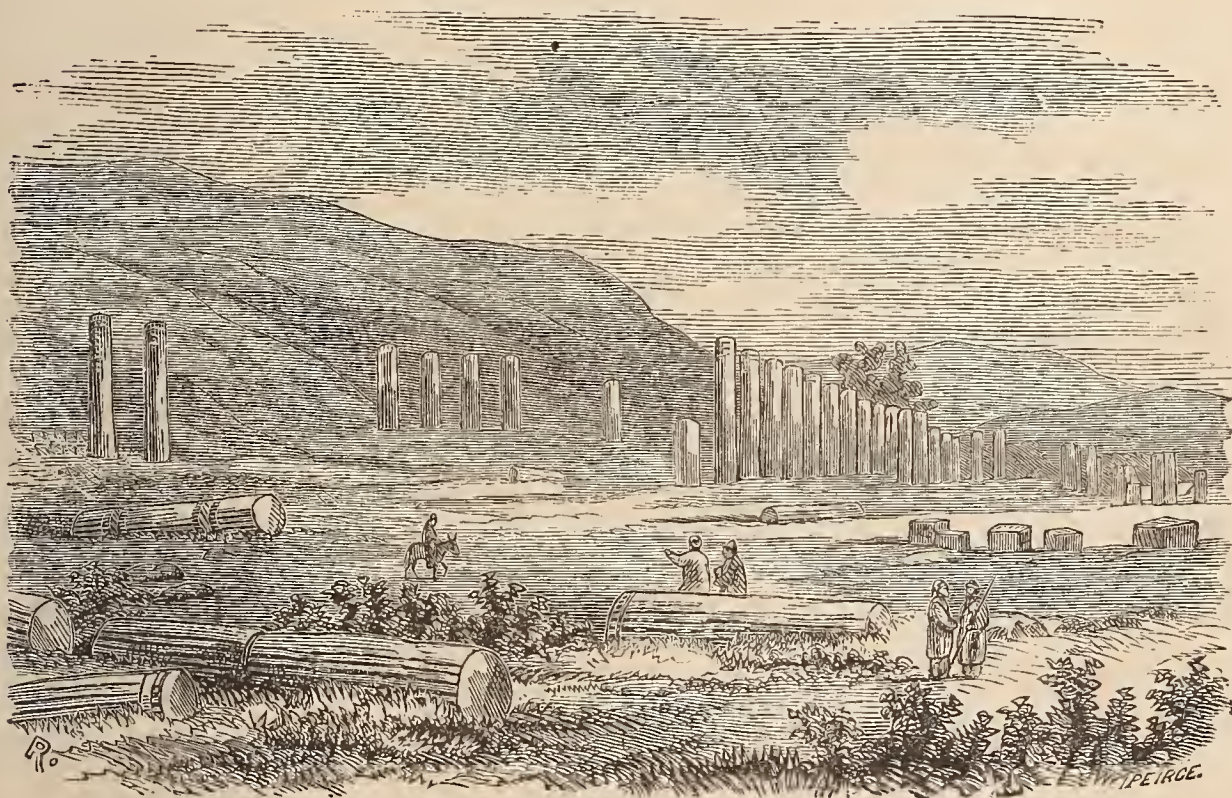


SAMARIA, FROM THE SOUTH.

Nearly all of them were built for reasons which manifest themselves in the physical character of the sites which were chosen. Jezreel commands the wadies which lead from the great plain down to the Jordan, and was the key to the whole of Middle Palestine. Samaria, that fair, conical hill southwest of Shechem, whose strategic worth was so well known to Herod the Great that he fortified it with consummate care;



was a point whose value was at once recognized ; and Tirzah, though so beautiful, — “comely as Tirzah,” — was selected because it, too, crowned a hill, and hence was a place to hold easily, as well as to look down from, upon the approach of an enemy. Jeroboam’s fortifying of Penuel, the place of Jacob’s prayer, across the Jordan, was a stroke of strategic policy, effected both on account of the sacred associations of the



RUINS OF THE GREAT COLONNADE AT SAMARIA,

place, and also because it commanded the Jabbok ravine, down which fierce Arabs crept, on their way into Western Palestine ; and, in setting up an altar in Bethel, he took advantage of the sacred associations which clustered around that ancient spot, and helped give sanctity to the idolatrous worship inaugurated there.

A casual glance at the map would convey the impression that the extent of territory held by Judah was much less than



that of Israel ; yet, in this respect, there was very nearly equality. Judah for many years comprised not merely the south country of the patriarchs, but the long and mountainous tract of Edom. It was only in size, however, that they could be compared : in other respects, they could only be contrasted. I need hardly remind the reader of the gaunt and savage bareness of the southern portion of Palestine ; of its naked wadies ; its gray, dreary hillsides ; its few scattered bits of green, beautiful indeed, but prized more for their rarity than their attractiveness. Solomon's Gardens at Etham near Bethlehem, the Vale of Hebron, the snatches of verdure in the mountains of Edom, are well known ; but this scanty list can hardly be increased. But, at the north, how different ! Not to speak of the rich pasture-lands east of the Jordan, the instant that one passes from Benjamin to Ephraim, there is a change : the hills put on beauty, the vales become lovely, and at last, even luxuriant. The great Esdraelon, the equally fertile Buttauf and Huleh plains, the delightful hills of Naph-tali and Asher, the well-watered passes of Manasseh, are all in marked contrast with the sterile spaces of the south. In the rivalry, Nature certainly throws all the weight of outward charms on the side of the northern kingdom : the poverty was Judah's ; the milk and honey Israel's.

Yet, in making this distinction, I must not fail to point out certain sources of revenue enjoyed by the southern kingdom, independently of the scanty soil. These were the income derived from the commerce of the Red Sea, and the tribute levied upon the Philistines. Edom had always been a rich kingdom : all of the ships which landed at Elath and Ezion-geber paid customs to it ; all the caravans which passed from

the Red Sea northward to Damascus and Jerusalem had been taxed by it. To control the passes of Petra and to hold the harbors of the Red Sea was the source of a great income: and this was one of the fruits of David's conquests. The Philistines were not conquered by him; yet they were overawed, and held in a kind of subjection: — the balance was turned against them. Had David been wiser, he would never have ceased till the Philistines were entirely overcome; till the Jews had taken complete possession of the whole western coast: but this he did not do. The Philistines held their old domain, and paid their tribute; but they were able to intrigue with the Egyptians, and do immeasurable harm. It was their intent evidently to array the Egyptians against their own masters; and this we find they soon did. The very reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, shows us the great Egyptian king Shishak in alliance with Jeroboam, the able and resolute king of Israel, against the southern kingdom. It seems marvelous that David did not understand the need of suppressing the Philistines, and of putting his own men into their cities. It is perhaps the most striking proof that he did not rise to the grandeur of his opportunity, nor appreciate his mission. It was in Moses' thought to extend the limits of the nation to the Egyptian boundary: he knew its necessity even then. Joshua and the judges, unable to cope with the more civilized Philistines, could not fulfill the trust committed to them by the great founder of the nation; but David, the first who was able to subdue them, and people their cities with the Jews, did not see the necessity, and allowed the Philistines to pay their easy tribute, and carry on their secret negotiations with the Egypt-



ians. The full extent of the evil thus introduced was not felt till the Egyptians had begun their invasions of Palestine ; and then, too late, it was found that the corn which had been carried up by the Philistines to the Judæan hill-country, in the payment of tribute, was diverted from this channel, and used to provision the Egyptian armies.

The disruption and the formation of the two kingdoms inaugurate an epoch far different from any passed before. Thus Hebrew history widens out, and dovetails with the history of the world. It can not be sundered from that of the great nations of the East. Egypt, Syria, Assyria, and, later still, Media and Persia, have part in the destinies of Palestine. It was, however, not till the time to which we have now advanced that the great empires on the Euphrates and the Tigris began to grow, and to assume importance in the eyes of men. Down to that time, Egypt had no great rival there, and Palestine was not on the highway between great and hostile powers. Syria on the north, with Damascus as its capital, was, it is true, a formidable power ; but there was no collision with it till the time of David, and Syria was no rival to Egypt. But when Assyria rose, and advanced with giant strides, and absorbed in one great nation the countless Mesopotamian tribes, Egypt and Assyria came into deadly rivalry ; and the possession of the mountain-block of Palestine was a gain of great moment to each of these great empires. Here may be seen the significance of the invasions made by the armies of the Egyptians, and those of the Assyrians and the Babylonians. Palestine was a place not important in itself, but most important as a strategic position. It lay, a natural fortress, on the extreme northeast of Egypt, on the extreme

west of the Mesopotamian empires. Between the heights east of the Jordan and the Euphrates stretches a bare and monotonous plain. Between Philistia and Egypt is another waste. Between these two great and desolate spaces, there is the mountain-block of Palestine ; its southern portion singularly inaccessible and secure. It was in the possession of a vigorous, united, freedom-loving people. Had Palestine remained united, it would have been impossible for either Assyria or Egypt to attack it with any hope of success. As it was, even Judea fell most reluctantly ; and it was long before Jerusalem yielded. But the dissensions of the Jewish nation were working both north and south. We see new and strange alliances forming and dissolving, — Syria with Israel, Syria with Judah, Assyria with Judah, Egypt with Judah ; and the shifting kaleidoscope of events manifests the incessant weakening of the two rival Jewish powers, till one fell, and then the other. Efforts full of zeal were made to stay the downward course of both Judah and Israel, but all in vain. At the time that the northern kingdom was subjecting itself to the fatally enervating influence of Tyre, the great prophet Elijah, from the hills of Gilead, east of Jordan, was going up and down the hills of Ephraim, endeavoring to rouse the people to a sense of shame, and to a need of meeting the tremendous crisis which was upon them. Not more impressive does that single-hearted and heroic man appear, when, standing on the heights of Carmel, he humbled the priests who were promulgating the Tyrian worship of Baal, than when he confronted the wicked Ahab, stung him with his taunts, roused him with his imprecations, and restored courage and hope to the people. It is not too much to say, that, had it not been



for that plain-spoken and earnest man, Israel would have utterly succumbed to Syria, and have perished from the list of nations. Independently of coalitions, it is plain that Israel and Judah combined were more than a match for Syria, and able to stand successfully against either Egypt or Assyria. So, too, the last-named great powers were so equally matched, that it was a vital matter for Palestine to be in the possession of one of them. The division of the Jewish people made them a prey to one another, — a prey to Syria on the north, a prey to Assyria on the east, a prey to Egypt on the southwest. It is a tangled skein, the story of the Assyrian, Syrian, and Egyptian invasions : it were entirely out of place to follow it here. But the whole intricate history hinges on geographical considerations. The situation of Palestine, and its physical character, are the key not more to its early isolation than to the eager desire to possess it after the short-lived Assyrian power rose. Even down at the time of Cyrus, when the kingdom of Babylon had absorbed the earlier Assyria, we find the working of a high geographical law governing even the politics of that clement prince. Doubtless Nehemiah was actuated by no spirit but loyalty to his nation in endeavoring to reinstate the Jews at Jerusalem. His desire to build up the city, to protect it with a wall, and to inaugurate worship there, sprang from no lower motive than patriotism : it was pure and simple. But it was not so with Cyrus. He is generally supposed to have been actuated by no feelings but clemency in allowing the Jews to return from their captivity, and restore the waste places of their land. But a more subtle spirit probably possessed him : political design was almost unquestionably at the basis of that movement. The Assyrian colonies,

which had moved into Samaria and the northern tract, took root in the land, tilled it to advantage, and grew to be important communities. But the strategic value of the country in relation to Egypt, the one great rival to the Asiatic empires, lay, not in the northern, but the southern part of Palestine. The northern portion was comparatively open and accessible ; the southern portion not at all so. Yet the latter was a singularly unattractive region. After Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the Jews carried into captivity, it was a difficult task to cause the people of Babylon to leave their fair gardens, and go up to that barren hill-country. Had they been willing to do so, their undoubted allegiance to the throne of Babylon would have made them, as a garrison, much more effective than Jews would have been ; for it is a noteworthy fact, that after Palestine had lost its old independence, and passed into the estate of vassalage, it bore the Egyptian much more readily than the Mesopotamian yoke. Cyrus, determining to keep that natural fortress in his possession as a strong frontier defense, and finding it almost impossible to cause his own subjects to go up thither and possess it, allowed the Jews to do this, and granted to Nehemiah all assistance in rebuilding the fallen city and in strengthening the whole country. Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah appears to have suspected the deep significance of the favor which was shown them and their nation : they accepted as a gracefully-given bounty what was the induction of a wise and astute policy. It was hard to get the more wealthy Jews to leave Babylonia, and go back : they had become merchants, and were as unequal in their success there as their successors are in the great marts of the world ; the poor being very poor, and the rich becoming very rich.



There were some, therefore, who were glad to return ; and the richer and more successful ones, unwilling to return themselves, did not withhold liberal presents, and co-operated with Cyrus in giving to those who went up to Jerusalem all suitable help. Nothing but religious fervor and patriotism could carry them back to their old barren home. This Nehemiah and Ezra had in great measure ; this the poorer Jews had ; this the wealthy Jews had not commensurately with the sacrifice of worldly advantages which it involved. But Cyrus, rather wise than generous in this thing, availed himself of what indirectly gave him a hold on Palestine ; and not only permitted, but gave valuable aid to the retiring Jews. This is the only way of interpreting his conduct. But this makes it all clear. And still more manifest does the character of his apparent kindness to the Jews appear if what Herodotus affirms be true, — that Cyrus meditated the conquest of Egypt.

The comparative fruitfulness of the northern and southern portions of Palestine may be seen, in another direction, to have had an immense weight in determining the hands into which they were to fall. When the Assyrian monarchs, Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Esar-haddon, came up against Palestine, entered it by the north, and captured the portion which lay open to them (namely, that part which was held by the northern tribes), they put Judah into an estate of vassalage, it is true, and attempted to overrun her, and take Jerusalem, but were unable. The northern and more unprotected portion, making little resistance, was at their mercy ; and their course was the natural one of removing the population, and substituting their own. The country was so attrac-

tive, that Assyrians were glad to exchange their own plains for its fertile uplands, its delightful valleys. It was not necessary, as at a later time, when Assyria had passed away, and Jerusalem had been the prey of the mighty nation which had engulfed the Assyrian empire, — it was not necessary to coax Israelites to go back to their own land: they lived and they died in their new home in Halah and Habor and Hara, on the River Gozan. Had that northern portion been sterile, the Assyrian princes would hardly have been able to garrison it with their own men, and the removal of the tribes would have been followed by an utter abandonment of the land. And so it was brought about of God, that the Jews were sent back, laden with wealth, to till their own hills, and rebuild their own chief city; while the northern tribes, once taken away, never returned.

We hear now and then the question raised, “What became of the lost tribes?” No idler theme was ever started; and the folly of some of the opinions broached in connection with it is hardly surpassed by the absurd identification of Ophir with Peru. The Scriptures are explicit in their account of the places in Assyria to which the Israelites were conducted. We know the feeble hold that their faith had on those northern tribes, and need no further assurance than their history gives us elsewhere, that it were a light thing for them to abandon their faith, and in all respects ally themselves with the people with which they were incorporated. Beyond question, they became a part of the nation living on the banks of the Tigris and its tributaries, and lost all national individuality. Were there prophets among them who endeavored to keep alive the national spirit, their voice was unheeded, and



their names have not lived till this day. The discovery of those tribes in China, in India, in America, is one of the idlest fancies of the day ; nor is it hardly to be believed that much chance exists longer of detecting the faintest vestiges of them in the land to which they were transferred.



POOL OF SILOAM.

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